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UNITED STATES-VIETNAM RELATIONS  
1945-1967

STUDY PREPARED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

BOOK 8 OF 12

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Printed for the use of the House Committee on Armed Services

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON : 1971

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## INTRODUCTION

The following is the unclassified text of the 1968 Department of Defense study, "United States Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967," popularly known as the Pentagon Papers.

At the time the existence of this study became known, through unauthorized public disclosures, the Committee on Armed Services requested a copy of the study, which was provided to the Committee and which has been continually available for inspection by Members of Congress. At the same time, as Chairman of the Armed Services Committee and with the concurrence of the senior minority member, Rep. Leslie C. Arends, I asked the Department of Defense to declassify the study on an expedited basis so that it could be made available to Members of Congress and to the American people.

I am now directing that it be printed as a Committee document and that a copy be provided to each Member of the House of Representatives. Copies will also be on sale to the public at the Government Printing Office. The 12-volume text here contains the first 43 volumes of the original 47-volume study. The last four volumes have not as yet been declassified because they deal with negotiations which are still in progress.

F. EDW. HÉBERT, *Chairman,*  
*Committee on Armed Services.*



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
*Washington, D.C., September 20, 1971.*

Honorable F. EDWARD HÉBERT,  
*Chairman, Committee on Armed Services*  
*House of Representatives*  
*Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: In accordance with the discussions which took place at the time of the delivery to the Congress of the classified version of the 47-volume 1968 study of "U.S. Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967," we are transmitting herewith for your use four sets of the declassified study. You will note that the declassified review contains 43 volumes. The last four volumes of the 47-volume set have not been declassified because they deal exclusively with sensitive negotiations seeking peace and the release of prisoners of war. Their disclosure would adversely affect continuing efforts to achieve those objectives.

As I am sure you can appreciate, the review of approximately 7,000 pages has been a difficult task, complicated by the pattern of prior unauthorized disclosures and pending and potential actions in the courts. Of course, some of the material has been declassified solely on the basis of prior disclosures. The review has been accomplished on an expedited basis in order to comply with your request for the material on a declassified basis for hearings which the Congress has indicated are in prospect. Because of the time constraint imposed on the review, it is possible, even probable, that errors of omission and commission have been made during the review. This, however, represents the best possible effort taking into consideration the time available and the numerous complicating factors which influenced the review. Other than the last four volumes, we have been able to make available to you in unclassified form the bulk of the study.

Sincerely,

RADY A. JOHNSON,  
*Assistant to the Secretary for Legislative Affairs.*

**FINAL REPORT—OSD Task Force, Vietnam**  
**and**  
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## OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

### MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

THROUGH: Mr. Paul C. Warnke, ASD/ISA

Dr. Morton H. Halperin, DASD/Policy Planning and Arms Control/ISA

SUBJECT: Final Report, OSD Vietnam Task Force

*15 January 1969.*

On June 17, 1967, Secretary Robert S. McNamara directed that a Task Force be formed to study the history of United States involvement in Vietnam from World War II to the present. Mr. McNamara's guidance was simply to do studies that were "encyclopedic and objective." With six full-time professionals assigned to the Task Force, we were to complete our work in three months. A year and a half later, and with the involvement of six times six professionals, we are finally done to the tune of thirty-seven studies and fifteen collections of documents contained in forty-three volumes.

In the beginning, Mr. McNamara gave the Task Force full access to OSD files, and the Task Force received access to CIA materials, and some use of State Department cables and memoranda. We had no access to White House files. Our guidance prohibited personal interviews with any of the principal participants.

The result was not so much a documentary history, as a history based solely on documents—checked and rechecked with ant-like diligence. Pieces of paper, formidable and suggestive by themselves, could have meant much or nothing. Perhaps this document was never sent anywhere, and perhaps that one, though commented upon, was irrelevant. Without the memories of people to tell us, we were certain to make mistakes. Yet, using those memories might have been misleading as well. This approach to research was bound to lead to distortions, and distortions we are sure abound in these studies.

To bring the documents to life, to fill in gaps, and just to see what the "outside world" was thinking, we turned to newspapers, periodicals, and books. We never used these sources to supplant the classified documents, but only to supplement them. And because these documents, sometimes written by very clever men who knew so much and desired to say only a part and sometimes written very openly but also contradictorily, are not immediately self-revealing or self-explanatory, we tried

both to have a number of researchers look at them and to quote passages liberally. Moreover, when we felt we could be challenged with taking something out of context, we included the whole paper in the Documentary Record section of the Task Force studies (Parts V and VI. A and B). Again seeking to fend off inevitable mistakes in interpretation and context, what seemed to us key documents were reviewed and included in several overlapping in substance, but separate, studies.

The people who worked on the Task Force were superb—uniformly bright and interested, although not always versed in the art of research. We had a sense of doing something important and of the need to do it right. Of course, we all had our prejudices and axes to grind and these shine through clearly at times, but we tried, we think, to suppress or compensate for them.

These outstanding people came from everywhere—the military services, State, OSD, and the "think tanks." Some came for a month, for three months, for six months, and most were unable, given the unhappiness of their superiors, to finish the studies they began. Almost all the studies had several authors, each heir dutifully trying to pick up the threads of his predecessor. In all, we had thirty-six professionals working on these studies, with an average of four months per man.

The quality, style and interest of the studies varies considerably. The papers in Parts I, II, III, and IV.A, concerning the years 1945 to 1961 tend to be generally non-startling—although there are many interesting tidbits. Because many of the documents in this period were lost or not kept (except for the Geneva Conference era) we had to rely more on outside resources. From 1961 onwards (Parts IV.B and C and VI.C), the records were bountiful, especially on the first Kennedy year in office, the Diem coup, and on the subjects of the deployment of ground forces, the decisions surrounding the bombing campaign against North Vietnam, US-GVN relations, and attempts at negotiating a settlement of the conflict.

Almost all the studies contain both a Summary and Analysis and a Chronology. The chronologies highlight each important event or action in the monograph by means of date, description, and documentary source. The Summary and Analysis sections, which I wrote, attempt to capture the main themes and facts of the monographs—and to make some judgments and speculations which may or may not appear in the text itself. The monographs themselves stick, by and large, to the documents and do not tend to be analytical.

Writing history, especially where it blends into current events, especially where that current event is Vietnam, is a treacherous exercise. We could not go into the minds of the decision-makers, we were

not present at the decisions, and we often could not tell whether something happened because someone decided it, decided against it, or most likely because it unfolded from the situation. History, to me, has been expressed by a passage from Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* where he writes: "This is a world of chance, free will, and necessity—all interweavingly working together as one; chance by turn rules either and has the last featuring blow at events." Our studies have tried to reflect this thought; inevitably in the organizing and writing process, they appear to assign more and less to men and free will than was the case.

LESLIE H. GELB,  
*Chairman, OSD Task Force.*

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LESLIE H. GELB,  
*Chairman, OSD Task Force.*



# UNITED STATES - VIETNAM RELATIONS

## 1945 - 1967

V.B.2.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE WAR  
- INTERNAL COMMITMENTS -

The Truman Administration, 1945-1952

BOOK I - 1945-1949

JUSTIFICATION OF THE WAR -- INTERNAL COMMITMENTS

The Truman Administration, 1945 - 1952

Foreword

This portion of the study consists of a collection of U. S. Government documents which set forth the rationale of U. S. policy toward Vietnam. The collection represents the internal commitment of the U.S. as expressed in classified documents circulated at the highest levels in the Government. The documents are organized chronologically within each Presidential administration. This volume covers the Truman years, 1945-1952.

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41.	Ho Chi Minh has constantly given impression that "he would pay great attention to any suggestions" made by the U.S. O'Sullivan (Hanoi) to Byrnes, 5 June 1946.....	71
42.	U.S. Consul in Hanoi views Vietnam strength in Cochin-China as "diminishing," that Ho went to Paris for this reason, and at the same time, to seek support from French Left Wing. O'Sullivan to Byrnes, 5 June 1946.....	71
43.	Caffery reports Franco-Vietnam conference at Fontainebleau is off to a bad start, as Vietnamese delegation protested assumption of the chairmanship by head of the French delegation, protested creation of Cochin-China as an independent state, and accused French of violating 6 March agreement. Ho Chi Minh held conversations with Algerians on similarity of their problems. Caffery 3323 to Byrnes, 7 July 1946.....	73
44.	Vietnam breaks off negotiations at Fontainebleau on the grounds that France violated March 6 accord by convoking a new Dalat conference. Caffrey 3801 to Byrnes, 2 August 1946.....	74
45.	U.S. views recent moves by the French as designed to regain a large measure of control over Indochina in "violation of the spirit of the 6 March convention" and that widespread hostilities may result from Vietnamese resistance to these encroachments. Memorandum by Moffat (SEA) for Vincent (FEA), 9 August 1946.....	75
46.	U.S. views results of Dalat conference as a reasonable basis for the future, but far short of larger degree of independence desired by Vietnam, and it is difficult "to foresee any great degree success...so long as Cochin-China stays apart from Vietnam..." Reed 342 to Brynes, 17 August 1946.....	78
47.	U.S. expresses concern over "French colonial tendency picture U.S. as aggressive and imperialistic" and indicates closeness of this unwitting French colonial view to Communist Party line. Clayton (Acting SecState) 240 to Saigon, 4 September 1946.....	78

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48. U.S. looks at intelligence reports linking USSR to Ho Chi Minh and requests information on relative strength and outside contacts of Vietnam communists. Clayton 241 to Saigon, 9 September 1946.....	79
49. Caffery reports on visit of Ho Chi Minh just prior to signing <u>modus vivendi</u> ; Ho declares he is not a communist. Caffery 6131 to Byrnes, 11 September 1946.....	79
50. U.S. is informed by French of increased communist activities in French Indochina, chiefly Chinese Communist entrenchment in Saigon and Haiphong. Agencies outside of Indochina are supplying propaganda. Reed 374 to Byrnes, 17 September 1946.....	80
51. Caffery reports signing of <u>modus vivendi</u> and that Ho Chi Minh obtained satisfaction on many points, but French would have liked to include definition of Vietnam relations to Indochinese federation and French Union. Caffery 4671 to Byrnes, 17 September 1946.....	80
52. Saigon views "amicable" meeting of Ho Chi Minh and High Commissioner in light of belief that "French Communists desire soft-pedal communist trends in Vietnam for political reasons" prior to elections. Reed 411 to Byrnes, 19 October 1946.....	82
53. Ho Chi Minh informs the U.S. that effectiveness of <u>modus vivendi</u> depends on France, fighting would not stop unless French applied the agreement, and that Cochinchina "must be united to Vietnam." O'Sullivan 96 to Byrnes, 25 October 1946.....	82
54. Contact between Vietnam and Chinese Communists is apparent, but the presence of Chicoms as advisors in the provinces is difficult to verify. Reports of Chicoms in Haiphong are regarded with suspicion. O'Sullivan 101 to Byrnes, 1 November 1946.....	83
55. Caffery reports French concern over "positive proof" of direct contact between Moscow and Ho Chi Minh. Caffery 5857 to Byrnes, 29 November 1946.....	83
56. U.S. Consul views Ho Chi Minh's contacts with France as designed to facilitate application of Marxist principles when, and if, a Communist government is established in France. Further, French concern	



of Ho's communist contacts at this time is peculiar when they are forcing collaboration or preparing a puppet government; this ploy is a possible diversion from French policy in Indochina. O'Sullivan 131 to Byrnes, 3 December 1946..... 84

57. Acheson instructs Moffat on Ho Chi Minh's communist record and offers guidelines of U.S. policy in discussion with Ho. Essentially, the U.S. is concerned over Tonkin events, the American people have welcomed Indochinese attainments but violence imperils this sympathy, and U.S. is informing France similarly. The U.S. is not making formal intervention at this time. Acheson 305 to Saigon, 5 December 1946..... 85

58. U.S. feels France would engage in full scale military operations in Vietnam only if forced, since they realize it is no longer possible to maintain a closed door. However, Cochinchina political question must be settled and French cannot resolve it without a fight. The Cochinchinese prefer Tonkin to France. Reed 472 to Byrnes, 6 December 1946..... 87

59. Secretary Byrnes reviews basic French-Vietnamese difficulties for Missions at London, Moscow, and Nanking. Essentially, the difficulties revolve around deep nationalist sentiment and opposition to the French, guided by a few communist trained leaders in the government with apparent contacts with Moscow and Yenan. However, "French influence is important not only as an antidote to Soviet influence, but to protect Vietnam and SEA from future Chinese imperialism." Three basic troubles are mutual distrust, French irresolution of the term "free state," and Vietnamese intransigence. Byrnes message to certain Missions, 17 December 1946..... 88

60. Byrnes reviews recent French political crisis and influence of Indochina policy as an important factor. Outbreak of hostilities in Hanoi seen as serious and not likely to be resolved by Moutet and d'Argenlieu. Byrnes message to Moscow, Nanking and Saigon, 20 December 1946..... 90

61. Vincent informs Acheson that with inadequate forces and divided public opinion, the French have tried to accomplish in Indochina what a strong, united Britain found unwise to attempt in Burma. In short, "guerrilla warfare may continue indefinitely." The

- French should be informed of U.S. concern, especially since the conflict may come before the UN or other powers may intervene. Memorandum by Vincent for Acheson, 23 December 1946..... 91
62. U.S. advances reasons why the Vietnamese attacked the French on 19 December: (a) orders from Moscow to upset Southeast Asia, or to increase Communist Party strength in France as a result of a quick settlement if the CP should take power from Blum; and (b) hope for similar Javanese-Dutch settlement resulting from fighting while negotiating. O'Sullivan 154 to Byrnes, 23 December 1946..... 92
63. U.S. impresses concern over Tonkin events on the French, but expresses no offer to mediate. U.S. is concerned that the UN might become involved. Byrnes 6586 to Caffery, 24 December 1946..... 93
64. U.S. takes the position to oppose Chinese proposals for intervention in Indochina. Acheson 8317 to Gallman (UK), 27 December 1946..... 95
65. Reed, in discussing with whom Moutet can deal, offers creation of new government under Bao Dai and/or Tam. Reed 499 to Byrnes, 30 December 1946..... 95
66. The U.S. approves the Consul in Hanoi to act on humanitarian grounds to save lives, but cautions not to become involved in any situation which could be interpreted as mediating basic political issues without express authorization. Byrnes 25 to O'Sullivan, 31 December 1946..... 96

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67. The U.S. reasserts the non-involvement policy of approving sales of military arms and armaments to France except in cases which relate Indochina hostilities. Byrnes 75 to Paris, 8 January 1947..... 97
68. U.S. expresses support and full recognition of France's position; however, the U.S. cannot overlook dangerous outmoded colonial French methods. On the other hand, the U.S. does not desire that France be replaced by Kremlin communism as evidenced by Ho Chi Minh connections. The U.S. does not favor UN intervention, but "frankly we have no solution of the



- problem to suggest." George C. Marshall, Secretary of State, 431 to Paris, 3 February 1947..... 98
69. The U.S. is concerned that the Western democratic system is on the defensive in emerging nations and Southern Asia is in a critical phase. The key to the U.S. position is an awareness that in respect to the position of Western democratic powers in Southern Asia, the United States is in the same boat as the French, British and the Dutch. "We cannot conceive setbacks to the long range interests of France which would not also be setbacks of our own." The U.S. is ready to be helpful in any way, however, non-intervention is still the U.S. policy. Marshall 1737 to Paris, 13 May 1947..... 100
70. The State Department is concerned that a rumored, dry season French offensive would have repercussions in a Congress which will be called on for extensive financial aid to Western Europe in light of France's economic, financial, and food position. Marshall 3433 to Paris, 11 September 1947..... 103
71. M. Bollaert, French High Commissioner in Indochina, delivers publicly the most important declaration of French policy since before hostilities broke out. The French ask for a Vietnamese "representative government" to accept French terms, and exclude dealing with Ho Chi Minh except as a last resort, and then only for his surrender. The U.S. sees this policy resulting from a strengthened France (and a proportional unwillingness to make concessions) as a "retreat" from the March 6 accords. O'Sullivan letter to Marshall, 12 September 1947..... 104
72. The French deny any planned dry season military offensive. Caffery 3715 to Marshall, 12 September 1947..... 111
73. France considers Bollaert's policy speech as a step forward on two points: formal abandonment of Indochina federation idea, and acceptance of the principle of union of the three KYs without a referendum. Caffery 3753 to Marshall, 14 September 1947..... 112
74. The Chinese view French policy as making the position of U.S. and China difficult and do not see a successful government without participation of Ho Chi Minh. The "Chinese people" would not regard a Bao Dai monarchy favorably. Though his

personality and ability are impressive, Ho Chi Minh is regarded as a communist, and his regime on China's south border does not appear of critical importance. Stuart (Nanking) 2096 to Marshall, 18 October 1947..... 114

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75. India hesitates to submit Indochina question to the UN because France could veto and the GOI is not convinced that Vietnam [Ho Chi Minh] exercises de facto authority or represents majority viewpoint in Indochina. Marshall telegram to Consular Officers, 29 January 1948..... 116
76. A Ho Chi Minh lieutenant is reported going to India with a petition for UN intervention. Marshall 21 to Saigon, 3 February 1948..... 117
77. Hanoi Consul summarizes recent events centering on Bao Dai signing Bai d'Along conference accords. Bao Dai withdraws commitment and will stay in France until called for as "emperor." Rendall (Hanoi) 31 to Marshall, 19 February 1948..... 118
78. French Government authorizes Bollaert to approve formation of a provisional Vietnamese government headed by General Xuan. Caffery 2567 to Marshall, 12 May 1948..... 120
79. Xuan government arouses very little enthusiasm. Bao Dai is waiting for favorable signs to return. Stuart 971 to Marshall, 29 May 1948..... 121
80. French indicate dubious chances of success for Xuan Government. Caffery 3063 to Marshall, 9 June 1948..... 123
81. Chinese desire U.S. views on Ho Chi Minh's communist connections as an indicator of U.S. attitudes and ultimate policy vis-a-vis the Viet Minh. Stuart (Nanking) 1116 to Marshall, 22 June 1948..... 125
82. U.S. position on Ho Chi Minh is that he is a communist with a well-known record in the Comintern, but no evidence of a direct link to Moscow. Marshall 974 to Nanking, 2 July 1948..... 127
83. U.S. believes that given present world political and economic conditions, French cannot possibly amass sufficient strength for a military solution to Indochina. Marshall 2466 to Paris, 3 July 1948..... 130



84. Caffery suggests that the U.S. inform the French that they are faced with alternatives of approving Viet independence, union of three KYS or losing Indochina. Caffery 3621 to Marshall, 9 July 1948..... 134
85. U.S. approves Caffery's suggested action (tel 3621) and would publicly approve of French actions on Cochinchina status as a forward looking step toward settlement in Indochina. Marshall 2637 to Paris, 14 July 1948..... 135
86. U.S. feels that France is evading the issue of altering the French Colony status of Cochinchina which, in effect, nullifies the Baied'Along agreement. Marshall 2891 to Paris, 29 July 1948..... 136
87. The French Assembly must face the issue of changing Cochinchina status and approve Baie d'Along agreements, if the little progress in Indochina is not to be nullified, is the view of the French Ministry of Overseas Territories. Caffery 4034 to Marshall, 5 August 1948..... 137
88. U.S. seeks to determine, in the absence of firm commitments, how France can dispel Vietnamese distrust of French, split off adherents of Ho, or reduce hostilities. Marshall 136 to Saigon, 27 August 1948..... 138
89. U.S. believes "nothing should be left undone which will strengthen truly nationalist groups" in the steadily deteriorating Indochina situation. Marshall 3368 to Saigon, 30 August 1948..... 140
90. The U.S. publicly recognizes major strategem of communists in Southeast Asia is to champion the cause of local nationalism. Lovett 149 to Saigon, 22 September 1948..... 141
91. U.S. policy statement on Indochina cites four long-term objectives in Indochina: (1) eliminate communist influence, (2) foster association of the people with Western powers, particularly France, (3) raise the standard of living, and (4) to prevent undue Chinese penetration. The immediate objective is to satisfactorily resolve the French-Vietnamese impasse. Department of State Policy Statement on Indochina, 27 September 1948..... 143
92. The U.S. view is that for Moscow "prospects are excellent that Ho Chi Minh will eventually force the withdrawal of the French and set up the first 'New Democratic Republic' in Southeast Asia." Abbot (Saigon) despatch No. 195 to SecState, 5 November 1948..... 150

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93. The U.S., in assessing Bao Dai, cannot "irretrievably commit U.S. to support of native government which... might become virtually puppet govt..." Lovett (Acting SecState) 145 to Paris, 17 January 1949..... 152
94. The U.S. cautiously avoids any premature endorsement of Bao Dai in order to retain freedom of action in face of French pessimism. Acheson (SecState) 70 to Saigon, 2 May 1949..... 153
95. Abbot, Saigon Consul, reviews the entire Indochina situation (for the New Delhi Foreign Service Conference, February 1949) for the State Department. "The alternatives to the Bao Dai solution are either continued costly colonial warfare or French withdrawal leaving a communist-controlled government in a strategic area of Southeast Asia." Abbott despatch 93 to SecState, 5 May 1949..... 154
96. The U.S. desires the success of Bao Dai experiment and will extend recognition, as there appears no other alternative to the established communist pattern in Vietnam and possible communist success in China. Acheson 77 to Saigon, 10 May 1949..... 190
97. U.S. fears France is offering "too little too late" and the U.S. should avoid "a conspicuous position" of any kind. Acheson 83 to Saigon, 20 May 1949..... 193
98. The U.S. feels that the question of Ho Chi Minh's nationalism versus communism is "irrelevant." "All Stalinists in colonial areas are nationalists." Acheson 14 to Hanoi, 20 May 1949..... 196
99. The U.S. submits comments on the 8 March Franco-Bao Dai agreement to France. Essentially, the U.S., while hoping the 8 March agreements would succeed, is pessimistic that the requisite concessions will be made by France. Butterworth, FEA, letter 289 to Bruce (Paris), 6 June 1949..... 200
100. Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson requests the National Security Council to study the Asian situation to re-examine current policy. "The advance of communism in large areas of the world and particularly the successes of communism in China seriously affect the future security of the United States." Johnson Memo to NSC, 10 June 1949..... 217



101. The U.S. regards establishment of Bao Dai as only the "first step" in the evolution of the Vietnam problem and that France will have to concede more to accommodate nationalists. Webb (Acting) 145 to Rangoon, 20 June 1949..... 219
102. The Singapore Conference recommends that the U.S. join the UK in support of Bao Dai, that the French clarify Vietnam's legal status, that de facto recognition be granted on 1 January 1950, and hopes that the U.S. would fulfill its UN duties in event of an attack on Indochina. Bliss (London) A2063 to SecState, 9 November 1949..... 223
103. The National Security Council submits a report, "The Position of the United States with Respect to Asia," which, from a military view, indicates the "current basic concept of strategic offense in the 'West' and a strategic defense in the 'East.' The importance of Southeast Asia is principally as an exporter of strategic materials -- tin, fibers, and rubber." NSC 48/1, 23 December 1949..... 225
104. The President approves the conclusions of NSC 48/1 as amended. The basic objectives cited are -- development of stable nations and sufficient military power to prevent communist expansion in Asia, reduction of USSR influence in Asia, and prevention of power relationships which could threaten the U.S. Specifically, in Indochina, the U.S. will use its influence to resolve the colonialist-nationalist conflict. NSC 48/2, 30 December 1949..... 265

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105. The JCS reviews the current Mutual Defense Assistance Program and certain objectives evolve as the basis for future military assistance programs. A specific long range objective is "development of sufficient military power in selected nations of the Far East" to prevent encroachment by communism. JCS Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, 26 January 1950..... 273
106. The State Department recommends and President Truman approves recognition of the three legally constituted governments of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Memorandum for the President, 2 February 1950..... 276
107. The U.S. forwards the letters of recognition to the Associated States and requests a reply to the suggestion on exchange of diplomatic representatives. Acheson 59 to Saigon, 4 February 1950..... 278

108. Asiatic neighbors consider Bao Dai a French puppet. The U.S. should realize that ECA and military aid from the U. S. do not constitute decisive factors in Indochina's problems. Therefore the Griffin Mission should not commit ECA or military aid to French Indochina unless France "gives requisite public undertakings re further steps leading to status similar to Indonesia." Stanton (Bangkok) 160 to Acheson, 17 February 1950..... 280
109. The State Department submits to the NSC a report on "The Position of the United States with Respect to Indochina," which analyzes the problem to determine measures to protect U.S. security in Indochina and prevent communist expansion in the area. NSC No. 64, 27 February 1950..... 282
110. President Truman approves the designation of Mr. Robert A. Griffin as Chief of the Economic Survey Mission to Southeast Asia, with rank of Minister. Five basic objectives of the Mission are outlined: (1) determine needed projects of political significance; (2) prepare for Point 4 programs; (3) advise local officials of methods and extent of participation in Point 4; (4) brief U.S. representatives; and (5) investigate regional aspects of technical assistance. Department of State letter to Griffin, 1 March 1950..... 286
111. The State Department maintains to the Department of Defense that Indochina is subject to immediate danger and is the "most strategically important area of Southeast Asia." Dean Rusk believes that the resources of the U. S. should be deployed to "reserve Indochina from further Communist encroachment." Dean Rusk, Deputy Undersecretary of State to General James H. Burns, Defense Representative to Southeast Asia Aid Committee, 7 March 1950..... 288
112. Acheson instructs Saigon, in light of anticipated Franco-Viet friction on handling U.S. aid, that function of Griffin Mission is "clearly understood to be fact finding." Acheson 136 to Saigon, 9 March 1950..... 289
113. Griffin replies that "I understand that ours is an economic aid mission" and that the budding controversy could jeopardize the economic aid program. The French show no enthusiasm for Point 4. Gullion (Saigon) 176 to Acheson, 13 March 1950..... 290
114. Griffin submits his mission's preliminary conclusions on Indochina with a listing of specific urgent programs totaling \$23.5 million exclusive of military aid and indirect



U.S. aid (e.g., through France). Obstacles should not permit indecision to allocate aid money or materials; the "crux of the situation lies in prompt decisive action if desired political effect is to be attained." Griffin file copy of telegram sent to Acheson, 16 March 1950..... 292

115. The U.S. assumes that France is determined to protect Indochina from communist encroachment, that success depends on indigenous support, and that France supports Bao Dai, but that the French position and ultimate intentions are not clear to the rest of the world. The U.S. requests France to make a public statement of the concessions to Indochinese nationalism. Acheson 1363 to Paris, 29 March 1950..... 301

116. Acheson advises Griffin Mission of the implications for U.S. policy in Vietnam: (1) The prospect of U.S. aid indirectly would cause crisis (induce hyper-confidence in Viets); (2) Viets bitter at Huu appointment (and the U.S.) may magnify the U.S. role; (3) it is better for the U.S. if a national union government is set up; and (4) the aid program can more easily be worked out with Huu Government. Acheson 244 to Griffin, 9 April 1950..... 305

117. Department of State requests an assessment of the strategic aspects of Indochina from a military point of view because of the threat of communist domination. The Joint Chiefs of Staff indicate that the "mainland states of Southeast Asia also are at present of critical strategic importance to the United States," because of the requirement to stockpile strategic materials acquired there, as well as the threat to other states on the "line of containment." JCS Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, 10 April 1950..... 308

118. The Joint Chiefs of Staff concur with the State Department on the importance of Southeast Asia to the U.S. However, the JCS urge a more forceful and positive U.S. position than expressed by State -- "...in order to retrieve the losses resulting from previous mistakes on the part of the British and French, as well as to preclude such mistakes in the future, the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider it necessary that positive and proper leadership among the Western Powers be assumed by the United States in Southeast Asia matters." JCS Memorandum for SecDef, 2 May 1950..... 315

119. The JCS recommend telling the French that the U.S. is prepared to assist France and the three Associated States and that arrangements for U.S. military aid be made. JCS Memorandum for SecDef, 2 May 1950..... 318

120. President Truman approves \$10 million for military items to Indochina. Acheson 2049 to London, 3 May 1950..... 321
121. Griffin reconstructs the Indochina situation for Secretary Acheson. Griffin indicates that the present status quo cannot be maintained. "Time is of the essence...." if Bao Dai starts to slip, "it will be impossible to restore him." Given that the French are aware that a military solution is unattainable, "the U.S. must find out what the French expect of Vietnam." Griffin Memorandum to Secretary of State, 4 May 1950..... 322
122. The special survey mission headed by R. Allen Griffin recommends a modest \$60 million economic and technical assistance program for Southeast Asia. State press release 485, 11 May 1950..... 327
123. The Ministers of the U.S., U.K., and France agree that while Southeast Asia is of strategic importance to the U.S., the direct responsibilities of U.K. and France make it of greater concern to them. Extract of Tripartite Ministerial Talks, 13 May 1950..... 328
124. The French affirm responsibility for Indochina, acknowledge "supplementary" U.S. assistance, and assure that 8 March agreements would be "liberally implemented." London - SECTO 256, 14 May 1950..... 330
125. U.S. formally announces intent to establish an economic aid mission to the three Associated States of Indochina. State press release 545, 25 May 1950..... 332
126. On the basis of the Griffin recommendations, the U.S. publicly announces the launching of a program of rapid economic aid to Southeast Asia. Secretary of State Dean Acheson letter to R. Allen Griffin, 3 June 1950..... 335
127. North Korea attacks South Korea and President Truman announces U.S. military assistance not only to South Korea but also an "acceleration in the furnishing of military assistance to the forces of France and the Associated States in Indochina and the dispatch of a military mission...." Presidential Statement, 27 June 1950..... 336
128. The U.S. clarifies the principles governing U.S. military aid to Indochina. Essentially, the basic principles are: U.S. aid supplements French assistance to Associated States.



- to achieve internal security; assist army of the French Union against communist aggression; Korean events could cause diversion of aid from Associated States. Acheson 4 to Saigon, 1 July 1950..... 338
129. A summary of existing policy on Indochina reveals the JCS view on NSC 73 that the U.S. give consideration to providing air and naval assistance should the Chinese provide overt support to the Viet-Minh. Consultants' Meeting; 25 July 1950..... 341
130. The U.S. feels that French requests for overall assistance (military, economic, and political) are inadequate to "consummate U.S. broad objectives in Indochina" and assistance will have to be increased to resist encroachment of communism. Heath (Saigon) 170 to Acheson, 7 August 1950.... 343
131. The U.S. views growing political and military deterioration in Indochina with concern; especially evident are failure of the government to gain support, disinclination of Bao Dai to assume leadership role, and indications of CHICOM-Viet Minh military collaboration. The U.S. seeks to have Vietnam establish a national army and declare a national emergency. Acheson 238 to Saigon, 1 September 1950..... 344
132. The U.S. informs France that the U.S. was prepared to increase assistance to French Union forces but could not furnish money for local use or direct tactical air support. Extract of Summary Minutes of Tripartite, Foreign Ministers Meeting, France, U.K., and U.S., 14 September 1950..... 347
133. The Southeast Asia Aid Policy Committee (SEAC) proposes a statement of U.S. policy on Indochina to the NSC for consideration. "The U.S. will not commit any of its armed forces to the defense of Indochina against overt, foreign aggression...." but should assist in the "formation of new national armies of the three Associated States." The U.S. should also "press the French" to carry out the agreements of 8 March 1949 and 30 December 1949. SEAC D-21, 11 October 1950..... 349
134. "The draft statement of U.S. policy in Indochina is weak from the political side....the Defense representatives argued for a strong, hardhitting policy on political and economic concessions. The State Department representatives flatly refused....to consider Indochina in that manner. Consequently, the paper ended with a compromise." K. T. Young, DoD Office of Foreign Military Affairs, letter to General Malony, SEAC, 13 October 1950..... 369



135. The State Department announces the results of high level conversations with French Ministers and that the U. S. Congress has appropriated one-half billion dollars in military assistance for the Far East. Department of State press release 1066, 17 October 1950..... 371
136. State and Defense recapitulate talks with the French Ministers, analyze Saigon's views on Indochina, and review the proposed NSC policy statement on Indochina: The French had not programmed equipment for 18 battalions in the 1951 budget and further had requested that the U.S. pay for and maintain the National armies when formed. It appears that the French will withdraw from Tonkin and may throw the problem to the U.N. The draft policy statement is considered quite adequate. Memorandum for the Record (Mr. K.T. Young), 17 October 1950..... 373
137. The current situation in Indochina reveals serious weakness in French manpower, leadership, and intelligence. The Viet Minh forces are building up for large-scale offensives to seize complete control of Indochina. The French Union forces of 353,970 are opposed by 92,500 Viet Minh regulars and 130,000 irregulars. U.S. Naval Intelligence Memorandum, 17 October 1950..... 382
138. The U.S. informs Emperor Bao Dai, with emphasis, that it is imperative that he give the Vietnamese people evidence of his determination to personally lead his country into immediate and "energetic opposition" to the communist menace. The U.S. has interpreted his "prolonged holiday" on the Riviera as lack of patriotism. It is tactfully suggested that further displays of procrastination might lead to loss of U.S. support for his government. Acheson 384 to Saigon, 18 October 1950..... 388
139. A Defense view is that it is "most important that the French do not quit cold and leave a political vacuum behind them." The U.S. should give increased military aid but not intervene and stress political steps by the French. Memorandum for Secretary Finletter, 19 October 1950..... 391
140. U.S. desires the immediate political and military advantages sought in the National army plan be found through integration of armed native contingents (Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, Catholics, etc.) into an army commanded by Bao Dai. Acheson 436 to Saigon, 25 October 1950..... 393
141. U.S. approves French request to transfer 24 -105 mm howitzers and 6 -155 mm howitzers of MDAP assistance to Indochina. Acheson 2250 to Paris, 27 October 1950..... 394

142. General Brink, Chief MAAG-Indochina, reports that the French contemplate changing troops from "pacification" dispositions to larger unit regroupment. French military plans are keyed to delays in political decisions. Saigon 763 to Acheson, 4 November 1950 (see Enclosure A to Document No. 146, below)..... 405
143. The U.S. does not favor use of the Peace Observation Commission in Indochina and if the Indochina subject is to come into the United Nations, it is preferred that the French do it. Acheson 516 to UN, 22 November 1950..... 395
144. The U.S. publicly welcomes the French statement which assures independence of the Associated States of Indochina within the French Union and that their resources will be directed "to the defense of Indochina against communist colonialism." Department of State press release 1187, 27 November 1950.... 397
145. "If the Communists are successful in Korea, this may so weaken the French in Indochina that they will pull out. He [Secretary Acheson] doubted if any one of the President's advisers would urge him to intervene in that situation." Extract from Truman-Attlee Conversations, 4 December 1950..... 398
146. The Joint Chiefs of Staff position paper on possible future action in Indochina, 28 November 1950, is circulated for NSC consideration. This paper includes the Brink report (4 November 1950) as a reference. The JCS short term objectives emphasize urgent action to deny Indochina to communism, insure retention of responsibility by France, and development of an over-all military plan for Indochina. The long term objectives seek to prevent communist expansion, to establish internal security conditions such as the foreign armed forces would be removed, to press the French to carry out commitments, and to establish a regional security arrangement in Southeast Asia. Executive Secretary to the NSC, NSC 64/1, 21 December 1950..... 399

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147. President Truman reasserts that U.S. aid to the French Union forces and National armies of the Associated States will continue. Truman-Pleven Conversations, 30 January 1951..... 417
148. The U.S. is very unlikely to engage itself to finance the budgetary deficit of France (25 billion francs) required for the National armies in Indochina. Acheson 974 to Saigon, 30 January 1951..... 419



149. The first progress report on NSC 64, which was approved on 27 March 1950, assesses the most severe threat to French Indochina as the increased capability of the Viet Minh resulting from Red Chinese aid. Optimistically, the report concludes that "American military aid furnished the State's forces and the Army of the French Union may have been the decisive factor in the preservation of the area against communist aggression." State Department Memorandum to NSC, 15 March 1951..... 421
150. President Truman approves NSC Action 48/5 which states U.S. policy on Asia. With respect to Indochina, U.S. policy seeks to continue to increase French military effectiveness, to encourage internal autonomy, and to promote international support for the three Associated States. NSC 48/5, 17 May 1951..... 425
151. Dulles discusses problems with Parodi of participation of the three Associated States as "sovereign" with respect to U.N. membership, Viet Minh rival government, and positions of India, Burma, and Indonesia. Dulles-Parodi Conversation, 11 June 1951..... 446
152. The U.S. invites Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos to participate in signing of Japanese Peace Treaty. Saigon 132 despatch to State, 6 September 1951..... 447
153. The U.S. and Vietnam enter into an economic cooperation agreement. Agreement entered into force 7 September 1951... 449
154. The U.S. agrees with France that they will continue to be primarily responsible for Indochina, that U.S. troops should not be used, and that first priority in military aid should go to Indochina. U.S.-France Foreign Ministers Meeting, 11 September 1951..... 452
155. President Truman and Secretary Acheson pledge support for General DeLattre and that "we would not let Indochina fall into enemy hands." Memorandum of Conversation, Acheson, Schuman, and DeLattre, 14 September 1951..... 454
156. General DeLattre comments to the State Department that the aid program had not been working out satisfactorily due to the "missionary zeal" of certain "young men" which made it appear that the U.S. was extending its influence. State Department Discussions with DeLattre, 17 September 1951..... 456



157. The U.S. recounts the doubts and distrust remaining on the subject of colonialism in Indochina but maintains that the real issue is whether or not the Indochinese people will be allowed to exercise sovereignty or be subjected to communist terror. Dean Rusk Address, 6 November 1951..... 459
158. France requests that conversation take place immediately between U.S., U.K. and France concerning concerted action in the event of seemingly imminent Chinese intervention in Indochina. Bruce (Paris) 3765 to Acheson, 22 December 1951. 460
159. France delivers an aide-memoire to the U.S. on a proposal to appeal to the U.N. if Red China intervenes. Paris 3856 to Acheson, 29 December 1951..... 462

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160. Acheson reviews tripartite military discussions in which State did not participate. General Bradley, while unable to commit or indicate the extent of U.S. military assistance in the event of CHICOM invasion, would recommend to the President that a declaration be issued to Red China that retaliation would follow any aggression. Acheson 974 to Saigon, 15 January 1952..... 465
161. The NSC considers the consequences to the United States of communist domination of Southeast Asia. Loss of Southeast Asia is seen as putting economic and political pressures on Japan, opening sources of strategic materials to the Soviet Bloc, rendering the U.S. position in the Pacific precarious and jeopardizing lines of communication and trade routes to South Asia. If Red China intervenes, the U.S. should take appropriate military action as part of a U.N. action or in conjunction with others but not unilaterally. Annex to NSC 124, 13 February 1952..... 468
162. The CIA estimates that a joint warning against CHICOM intervention in Southeast Asia would tend to deter them, that initiation of action in the U.N. would probably bring a response similar to that regarding Korea, and CHICOM defiance of a joint warning would probably involve prior consent of the USSR. CIA Special Estimate, SE-22, 29 February 1952. 477
163. The JCS views on NSC 124 and Annex to NSC 124 are that military operations in defense of Indochina against Chinese Communist invasion must be accompanied by action against Communist China itself -- a course of action which might result in a long and expensive war, and that from a military point of view, the JCS oppose acceptance of all the military commitments of NSC 124. JCS Memorandum for the SecDef (forwarded to the National Security Council), 3 March 1952.. 486

164. The NSC recommends that the military implications of going to war in China be studied further and explained to the Council and the President; that the greater danger to Southeast Asia is subversion and not external aggression; and that contingencies for a French withdrawal be examined. NSC 113th Meeting (Item 3), 5 March 1952..... 502
165. The U.S. stresses to the British that rumors of French intentions to withdraw or negotiate with Ho Chi Minh are not true. The U.S. believes that France will stay in Indochina as long as sufficient U.S. aid is forthcoming. Acheson Conversation with British Ambassador, 28 March 1952..... 508
166. French stress their problems at tripartite meeting concerning their EDC commitments: (1) the French effort in Indochina, (2) financial difficulties and whether the strategic importance of SEA justified continued effort, and (3) Indochina is part of the European defense problem. France cannot continue to bear "alone such great share Indochinese burden." French attach great importance to U.S. aid. Acheson 7415 to State, 28 May 1952..... 511
167. If the Chinese invade Indochina, "he [Acheson] said it was clear that it was futile and a mistake to defend Indochina in Indochina. He said we could not have another Korea.... we could not put ground troops in Indochina....our only hope was of changing the Chinese mind." Secretary of State Note (L.D. Battle), 17 June 1952..... 515
168. U.S. informs France that appropriations would be prepared to provide up to 150 million dollars additional FY 1953 aid in support of overall French effort in Indochina. Acheson 7404 to Paris, 17 June 1952..... 517
169. Acheson publicly announces optimism over the conduct of the National armies in Indochina and that communist "aggression has been checked" and that the "tide is now moving in our favor." State Department Release 473, 18 June 1952..... 518
170. The President approves NSC 124/2 (NSC 124/1 as amended) on the U.S. objectives and courses of action with respect to Southeast Asia. With respect to Indochina, the U.S. would continue to assure the French of the international interest of the Indochina effort; use U.S. influence to promote political, military, economic, and social policies; provide increased aid in the absence of overt Chinese aggression; oppose French withdrawal; and seek collective action against Red China intervention. NSC 124/2, 25 June 1952..... 520

171. The U.S. and Britain discuss issuing a warning to Red China on intervention in Indochina. French successes could trigger Chinese intervention and the U.S. had "no infantry available for operations within Indochina." The U.S. thinking is along the lines of a naval blockade of China's coast. London Ministerial Talks, 26 June 1952..... 535
172. The French request that 150 American Air Force mechanics be detailed to Vietnam receives an opinion for favorable action from General Trapnell, MAAG Chief, who also recommends expediting delivery of aircraft promised for 1953. Saigon 1149 to Acheson, 5 December 1952..... 538
173. The U.S. approves participation of 25-30 USAF personnel in maintenance of French aircraft in Vietnam. Acheson 1286 to Saigon, 22 December 1952..... 540



THE STATE-WAR-NAVY COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

May 23, 1945

WE - Mr. Bonbright:

Herewith extract of minutes of SNMCC meeting held April 13, 1945, dealing with the subject "Use of Indo-China Resistance Forces." Item b at the end is, I think, what you are after:

"3. USE OF INDO-CHINA RESISTANCE FORCES  
(Agenda Item No. 2 - SNMCC 35/7)

MR. LOVETT stated that he took no exception to dispatch of the note to the French Ambassador revised as suggested by Mr. Dunn, but pointed out that this note covers only a small segment of the entire problem. He added that the question of our Indo-China policy is a matter of lively military interest and that the lack of a policy is a source of serious embarrassment to the military. He pointed out that Admiral Fenard has been using a technique of submitting a series of questions to various agencies of the United States Government and by obtaining even negative or non-committal responses thereto has been in effect writing American policy on Indo-China. Although Admiral Fenard has stated that he is convinced of our good faith in this matter, the pattern is such that suspicions have arisen in Paris as to the real United States position.

MR. LOVETT urged that this question be reconsidered in the light of three considerations:

a. Indo-China is in the China Theater. The Generalissimo is in supreme command of the China Theater and General Wedemeyer commands only the U. S. forces therein. Accordingly, under present command arrangements, the question of civil administration in Indo-China during the period of military occupation might more appropriately be referred to the Chinese rather than to the U. S. Government.

b. The Combined Chiefs of Staff have agreed that the French should not participate in operational planning in the Far East until detailed planning for liberation of Indo-China is undertaken. To date, the French have not been informed that there are no major operations contemplated toward direct liberation of Indo-China.

c. The British are actively assisting the French from the Southeast Asia Command (Lord Mountbatten) in operations in Indo-China. If the French are informed that no operations are planned by the U. S. from the China Theater for



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the liberation of Indo-China, it would give the British and French an argument to sustain the view that Indo-China should be in the British sphere rather than the U. S. sphere of strategic responsibility.

If it is apparent that no support for Indo-China operations is to be forthcoming from the China Theater, he felt that it is essential that we determine what our policy is to be and particularly that the French be informed that no major operations are contemplated in Indo-China. He also felt it essential that President Roosevelt's prohibition upon discussion of our Indo-China policy be reconsidered or reaffirmed promptly. MR. MATTHEWS agreed that the time has come when our position must be clarified.

MR. DOOKAN pointed out that the Subcommittee for the Far East to which the development of our Indo-China policy has been assigned for study has been unable to report in view of a divergence of views within the State Department which has not yet been resolved. MR. MATTHEWS stated that he had spoken to Mr. Dunn who felt that it is necessary to resolve these differences and clarify the policy.

ADMIRAL WILLSON questioned the desirability of telling the French definitely that no operations are planned for Indo-China.

After further discussion, THE COMMITTEE:

- a. Approved SINCC 35/7, after amending the Enclosure as suggested by Mr. Dunn.
- b. Agreed that the Department of State should take up the question of a prompt clarification of our policy on Indo-China by reference of the matter to the President in the light of the three factors enumerated by Mr. Lovett."

  
R.E.C.

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Caffery)*

WASHINGTON, April 19, 1945—8 p. m.

1576. From Matthews.<sup>12</sup> The French Embassy has been informally

<sup>12</sup>Freeman Matthews, Director of the Office of European Affairs.

notified that for the period March 29 to April 13 an appreciable number of missions have been flown into Indo-China at direct request of the French in addition to other air forces operations into Indo-China. Embassy was informed that steps have been taken to drop rations, small arms and clothing to one particular group in Indo-China and that question of further assistance to other groups is subject of active negotiations. [Matthews.]

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*The Secretary of State to the French Ambassador (Bonnet)*

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Excellency the Ambassador of the French Republic and acknowledges the receipt of the Embassy's note No. 304 of March 12, 1945, conveying the desire of the French Provisional Government to conclude with the Government of the United States an agreement analogous to the Franco-Allied agreement signed in London on August 25, 1944 and applicable to Indo-China.

Careful consideration has been given to the above proposal. The United States Government has consistently believed, and acted accordingly, that the development of military operations in the Far East must be aimed at the earliest possible defeat of Japan. Such operations require the concentration and use of all resources in armed forces, munitions, and shipping and, consequently, the diversion in the immediate future of such resources to specific military operations in Indo-China cannot be contemplated. In the circumstances, the Government of the United States knows of no useful purpose which would be served by the conclusion at this time of an agreement along the lines contemplated in the Embassy's note under acknowledgment.

WASHINGTON, April 20, 1945.



EDITORIAL NOTE:

With the death of President Roosevelt on 12 April 1945, the indecisive policy toward Indochina took on a new approach under the new President, Harry S. Truman. Shortly after being sworn in to office, U.S. policy was thoroughly reviewed. On 13 April, the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee met and discussed the urgent need for clarification of U.S. policy toward French-Indochina, document number 3. By 20 April, a Memorandum to the President on Indochina policy had been drafted by the State Department Division of European Affairs (EUR), documents number 5 and 6. The Division of Far Eastern Affairs (FE) revised the EUR version to the extent that it was substantially different from the original submitted, document number 7. The final compromise between the two versions resulted in a draft action cable for Paris and a Memorandum on American Policy with Respect to Indochina for the President, both of which appear as documents number 9 and 10. The record shows that the policy statements in the memorandum was neither sent to nor approved by the President and that the cable was not dispatched to Paris. The documentation concerning this evolvement of policy is included here as a revelation of the France-Indochina commitments internal to the Department of State and the impetus lent to policy making by the War Department in the latter phase of World War II.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIVISION OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

April 20, 1945

A-D - Mr. Dunn:

There is attached the original in final form of the proposed memorandum to the President on our policy on Indo-China which you approved in draft form this morning and which you indicated you would take up at the Staff Committee meeting tomorrow (Saturday) morning.

As you know, the memorandum was prepared as a result of a directive from SWNCC. I am sending copies to General Hillaring and to Mr. Downey in order to obtain informal clearance from the War and Navy. It has also been routed to Mr. Ballantine.

H. Freeman Matthews

*HFM*

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## MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Suggested Reexamination of American Policy  
with Respect to Indo-China

### General Observations

1. The Japanese aggression against the French in Indo-China last month has brought about a marked increase in the number of proposals advanced by the French for the use of French forces and resources in the Pacific.

2. The consequences of these military developments make it clear that our past policy, which held that the disposition of Indo-China was a matter for post-war determination and that the United States should not become involved in military effort for its liberation, is in urgent need of reexamination and clarification. This is particularly so in order that American military and naval authorities may have guidance to enable them to take appropriate action with respect to the French proposals referred to above.

3. The United States Government has publicly taken the position that it recognizes the sovereign jurisdiction of France over French possessions overseas when those possessions are resisting the enemy and has expressed the hope that it will see the reestablishment of the integrity of French territory. In spite of this general assurance, the negative policy so far pursued by this Government with respect to Indo-China has aroused French suspicions concerning our intentions with respect to the future of that territory. This has had and continues to have a harmful effect on American relations with the French Government and people.

4. On April 3, 1945, the Secretary of State with the approval of the President issued a statement of which the following excerpt is pertinent to the present problem:

"As to territorial trusteeship, it appeared desirable that the Governments represented at Yalta, in consultation with the Chinese Government and the French Provisional Government, should endeavor to formulate proposals for submission to the San Francisco Conference for a trusteeship structure as a part of the general organization. This trusteeship structure, it was felt, should be defined to permit the placing under it of the territories taken from the enemy in this war, as might be agreed upon at a later date, and also such other territories as might voluntarily be placed under trusteeship."

C O P Y



5. General de Gaulle and his Government have made it abundantly clear that they expect a proposed Indo-Chinese federation to function within the framework of the "French Union." There is consequently not the slightest possibility at the present time or in the foreseeable future that France will volunteer to place Indo-China under an international trusteeship, or will consent to any program of international accountability which is not applied to the colonial possessions of other powers. If an effort were made to exert pressure on the French Government, such action would have to be taken by the United States alone for France could rely upon the support of other colonial powers, notably, Great Britain and the Netherlands. Such action would likewise run counter to the established American policy of aiding France to regain her strength in order that she may be better fitted to share responsibility in maintaining the peace of Europe and the world.

#### Recommendations

In the light of the above considerations, the following recommendations, which have been communicated to the War and Navy Departments, are submitted for your approval.

1. The Government of the United States should neither oppose the restoration of Indo-China to France, with or without a program of international accountability, nor take any action toward French overseas possessions which it is not prepared to take or suggest with regard to the colonial possessions of our other Allies.

2. The Government of the United States should continue to exert its influence with the French in the direction of having them effect a liberalization of their past policy of limited opportunities for native participation in government and administration, as well as a liberalization of restrictive French economic policies formerly pursued in Indo-China.

3. The French Provisional Government should be informed confidentially that, owing to the need of concentrating all our resources in the Pacific on operations already planned, large-scale military operations aimed directly at the liberation of Indo-China cannot be contemplated at this time.

4. French offers of military and naval assistance in the Pacific should be considered on their merits as bearing upon the objective of defeating Japan, as in the case of British and Dutch proposals. The fact that acceptance of a specific proposal might serve to strengthen French claims for the restoration of Indo-China to France should not be regarded as grounds for rejection. On the contrary, acceptance of French proposals for military assistance in the defeat of Japan should be regarded as desirable in principle, subject always to military requirements in the theater of operations.

C O P Y

5. While avoiding specific commitments with regard to the amount or character of any assistance which the United States may give to the French resistance forces in Indo-China, this Government should continue to afford all possible assistance provided it does not interfere with the requirements of other planned operations.

6. In addition to the aid which we are able to bring from the China theater of operations to the French forces resisting the Japanese in Indo-China, the United States should oppose no obstacle to the implementation of proposals looking toward the despatch of assistance to those forces from the southeast Asia theater of operations, provided such assistance does not constitute a diversion of resources which the Combined Chiefs of Staff consider are needed elsewhere.

C O P Y.

## Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : A-D - Mr. Dunn

FROM : FE - Mr. Stanton

SUBJECT: Memorandum for the President Regarding Indochina.

DATE: April 21, 1945

With reference to the memorandum for the President on "Suggested Reexamination of American Policy with Respect to Indochina", FE makes the following comments and suggested changes:

Paragraph 1. FE concurs.

Paragraph 2. FE believes that this paragraph should be simplified to express only the need for a determination of policy.

Paragraph 3. FE concurs with the first sentence but believes that, in amplification, reference should be made to the fact that Indochina has until recently collaborated with the enemy. It believes that the balance of the paragraph should be omitted in view of the proposed revision of paragraph 2.

Paragraphs 4 and 5. FE fully concurs, but suggests that a brief summary--which to complete the record should include President Roosevelt's views--would suffice. It also believes that the last sentence of paragraph 5 is important enough to warrant separate statement with a caveat regarding American interests in Southeast Asia.

In addition to the general observations included in the memorandum, FE believes that to present a complete picture the memorandum should include:

A. A statement of the joint State-War-Navy decisions already made regarding Indochina.

B. Reference to the collaborationist history of the French administration in Indochina in distinction to the record of the colonies of our other Allies.

C. Statements as to the increasingly profound interest of the United States in the future of Southeast Asia.

D. A statement



D. A statement as to the independence sentiment in Indochina.

E. Reference to the French statements on Indochina indicating some concessions to the idea of autonomy for the French administration of Indochina, but which do not indicate an intention to permit genuine Indochinese self-government; and to the apparent reasons for these concessions.

F. Reference to the effect on China of past French economic policies in Indochina, and Chinese fears for the safety of its southwestern flank.

G. Reference to the danger inherent in the Thailand-Indochina boundary questions.

Recommendations 1 and 2. Recommendation 1, as drafted, refers to more than Indochina and would inject, for instance, problems involved in the Condominium Government of the New Hebrides. FE concurs in the basic policy that the United States should not seek a trusteeship for Indochina or international accountability unless similar action is to be sought from the British and the Dutch. It believes, however, that for the protection of American interests it is essential that French policies in Indochina follow a pattern more liberal than any heretofore announced. FE believes also that under present circumstances a policy of merely exerting influence to achieve such a result will not prove adequate.

Several times during the past few years the French authorities have made announcements regarding the future of Indochina which, though still inadequate to assure peace and stability in the area, indicates an intention to change their pre-war policies towards Indochina. It is the belief of FE that this change in attitude has been due, first, to a realization of the anti-French, independence sentiment among the Indochinese who must be wooed if French administration is to be successful and, second, to uncertainty as to the attitude of the United States and a feeling that United States support for restoration can be secured only by adoption of a more liberal policy. Any indication at this time that the United States will

not oppose French restoration in Indochina would negative American influence in securing French policies consonant with American interests. Accordingly, FE suggests that no statement of American policy with respect to post-war Indochina should be communicated to the Provisional French Government at this time.

-Because the liberation of Indochina is, in fact, dependent on American defeat of Japan; because we are sacrificing blood and treasure to assure peace and stability in the Far East, post-war maintenance of which will be largely our responsibility; because without recognition of the dynamic trends towards self-government among the peoples of Asia there can be no peace and stability in the Far East and the peoples of Southeast Asia may embrace ideologies contrary to our own or develop a pan-Asiatic movement against all western powers, FE believes that it would not be unreasonable for the United States to insist that the French give adequate assurances as to the implementing of policies in Indochina which we consider essential to assure peace and stability in the Far East.

We urge, therefore, that the policy of the United States should be that not to oppose the restoration of Indochina to France, provided the French give adequate assurances as to the following:

a. Development of a national or federal government to be run for and increasingly by the Indochinese themselves with no special privileges for French or other persons who are not inhabitants and citizens of Indochina so that within the foreseeable future Indochina may be fully self-governing and autonomous along democratic lines, except in matters of imperial concern in which Indochina should be a partner in the French Union.

b. Maintenance of a policy of non-discriminatory treatment and of complete economic and commercial equality.

c. Establishment of Haiphong as a free port with tax-free transit facilities between Haiphong and China.

d. Acceptance of a frontier between Indochina and Thailand, to be determined by an impartial, international commission.



e. Acceptance of such international security arrangements, including American or international bases, as may be determined to be necessary for international security, including protection of China's southwestern flank.

Recommendation 3. FE believes that the last part of the paragraph should be modified in accordance with military plans already adopted so that the French will not vainly hope for either American military operations or American supplies for the liberation of Indochina.

Recommendation 4. FE suggests that the first sentence be clarified to specify that French offers of assistance will be considered "solely on their military merits". It believes that with this change the balance of the paragraph is unnecessary and should be omitted.

Recommendation 5. FE believes that this paragraph should be omitted. If assistance can be given the French which will aid in the defeat of Japan without interfering with American strategic considerations, the military authorities can raise any political questions involved at that time. Meanwhile, FE believes that it would be desirable politically for the United States not to lend military aid to or be associated with the reestablishment of French control over Indochina.

Recommendation 6. There are now less than a thousand French resistance forces in Indochina (the rest having crossed the border to China) and this paragraph would appear unnecessary in a statement of policy recommendations.

Attached is a suggested draft of the memorandum to the President embodying the above modifications and changes, which FE earnestly believes are of great importance for the establishment and maintenance of peace and stability in the Far East.

B.T.S.

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: American Policy with Respect to Indochina

General Observations

1. The Japanese aggression against the French in Indochina last month has brought about a marked increase in the number of proposals advanced by the French for the use of French forces and resources in the Pacific. ✓

2. These proposals and recent military developments make it essential that the United States reach a definitive determination regarding its policy towards Indochina rather than, as heretofore, consider the disposition of Indochina a matter for postwar determination. ?

3. The joint State-War-Navy authorities have reached the decision that all American military efforts must be directed entirely to the major issue of defeating Japan in its homeland and that, for military reasons, American troops should not be used or equipment needed in American operations be utilized for the liberation of Indochina.

4. It is established American policy to aid France to regain her strength in order that she may be better fitted to share responsibility in maintaining the peace of Europe--where her chief interests lie--and of the world. However, in pursuing this policy, the United States must not jeopardize its own increasingly important interests in Southeast Asia. (2)

5. The United States Government has publicly taken the position that it recognizes the sovereign jurisdiction of France over French possessions overseas when those possessions are resisting the enemy, and has expressed the hope that it will see the reestablishment of the integrity of French territory. (4)

6. Until the last few weeks the French administration of Indochina has collaborated with the Japanese in marked distinction to the administrations of colonial areas belonging to our other Allies.

7. President Roosevelt recognized the future increasing importance to the United States of Southeast Asia. He saw the necessity of aiding the 150,000,000 people there to achieve improved social, economic and political standards.



He realized that dynamic forces leading towards self-government are growing in Asia; that the United States... as a great democracy--cannot and must not try to retard this development but rather act in harmony with it; and that social, economic or political instability in the area may threaten the peace and stability of the Far East and indeed the world.

8. As his solution of this problem, as it relates to Indochina, President Roosevelt long favored placing Indochina under a trusteeship. However, on April 3, 1945, the Secretary of State with the approval of the President issued a statement relative to the plans approved at Malta which would indicate that Indochina could come under the trusteeship structure only by voluntary action of the French. It is abundantly clear that there is no possibility at the present time or in the foreseeable future that France will volunteer to place Indochina under trusteeship, or consent to any program of international accountability which is not applied to the colonial possessions of other powers. If an effort were made to exert pressure on the French Government, such action would have to be taken by the United States alone for France could rely upon the support of other colonial powers, notably Great Britain and the Netherlands. (5)

9. The prewar French administration in Indochina was the least satisfactory colonial administration in Asia, both as regards the development and interests of the native peoples and as regards economic relations with other countries. Among the Annamites there is increasing opposition to French rule. The Chinese are giving active support to the independence movement. France will probably encounter serious difficulty in reimposing French control in Indochina.

10. If really liberal policies towards Indochina are not adopted by the French--policies which recognize the paramount interest of the native peoples and guarantee within the foreseeable future a genuine opportunity for true, autonomous self-government--there will be substantial bloodshed and unrest for many years, threatening the economic and social progress and the peace and stability of Southeast Asia.

11. On several occasions in the past few years, French authorities have issued policy statements on the future of Indochina. These show a growing trend toward greater autonomy for the French administration of Indochina,



but even the recent statement of March 24 is vague and, when examined with care, indicates little intention of permitting genuine self-rule for the Indochinese. The change in French attitude towards Indochina is believed to have been occasioned by clearer realization of the anti-French sentiment among the Annamites and a belief that American approval of French restoration can be won only by a liberalization of its policies towards Indochina.

12. China is exercised at the economic stranglehold which France formerly exercised through control of the Yunnan Railroad and the port of Haiphong, and is particularly perturbed at the danger to its southwest flank first made visible by the surrender of Indochina to the Japanese.

13. It is stated American policy that the cession of territory by Indochina to Thailand in 1941 is not recognized and that this territory must be returned to Indochina. This territory, however, had in earlier years been wrested by the French from Thailand and its inhabitants are culturally akin to the Thai. Similarly, parts of Laos are Thai in character. Whatever the legalistic background may be, the entire border region between Indochina and Thailand will be a source of potential conflict unless a fair and appropriate frontier is determined by an impartial international commission. The Thai Government will accept any frontier so determined.

14. It will be American victory over Japan which will make possible the liberation of Indochina. We are fighting to assure peace and stability in the Far East, and will, in fact, bear the major responsibility for its maintenance after the war. Encouragement of and assistance to the peoples of Southeast Asia in developing autonomous, democratic self-rule in close, willing association with major Western powers would not only be in harmony with political trends in that area, but would appear to be the one practical solution which will assure peace and stability in the Far East. If this policy is not followed, the millions who live in that area may well embrace ideologies contrary to our own--or ultimately develop a pan-Asiatic movement against the Western world. It is not unreasonable, therefore, for the United States to insist that the French give adequate assurances as to the implementing of policies in Indochina which we consider essential to assure peace and stability in the Far East.



## Recommendations

In the light of the above considerations, the following recommendations, which have been communicated to the War and Navy Departments for their comment, are submitted for your approval:

1. The Government of the United States should not seek a trusteeship, international or French, over Indochina, unless it seeks similar trusteeship by the British and Dutch over Burma and the Netherlands Indies, nor should the United States seek international accountability which is not sought for the adjacent colonial areas. It should not oppose restoration of Indochina to France, provided the French give adequate assurances that they will meet the following conditions:

a. Development of a democratic national or federal government to be run for and increasingly by the Indochinese themselves with no special privileges for French or other persons who are not inhabitants and citizens of Indochina so that within the foreseeable future Indochina may be fully self-governing and autonomous, except in matters of imperial concern in which Indochina should be a partner in the French Union.

b. Maintenance of a policy of non-discriminatory treatment and of complete economic and commercial equality.

c. Establishment of Haiphong as a free port with tax-free transit facilities between Haiphong and China.

d. Acceptance of a frontier between Indochina and Thailand, to be determined by an impartial international commission.

e. Acceptance of such international security arrangements, including American or international bases, as may be determined to be necessary for international security, including protection of China's southwestern flank.

2. For the present, the policy of the United States with respect to the postwar status of Indochina should not be communicated to the Provisional French Government.

3. The French Provisional Government should be informed, confidentially, that, owing to the need of concentrating all our resources in the Pacific on operations already planned, American military operations aimed directly at the liberation of Indochina cannot be contemplated until after the defeat of Japan, nor will it be possible to make any commitments for the furnishing of military equipment or supplies to resistance groups in Indochina or to French military forces in the Asiatic theatres of war.

4. French offers of military and naval assistance in the Pacific should be accepted or rejected by the military authorities solely on their military merits as bearing upon the defeat of Japan, as in the case of British and Dutch proposals.

THE UNDER SECRETARY

23.  
April 24, 1945

MEMORANDUM ON INDOCHINA

Mr. Dunn left the following message to be delivered to Mr. Grew on the subject of Indochina:

Mr. Dunn stated that he thought it was highly desirable to clarify our position on Indochina and to that end a paper had been drawn up by EUR and revised by FE. Mr. Dunn is definitely opposed to accepting FE's revision. He believes that it would be better just to let the matter drift rather than base our policy on the FE version of the Indochina paper. However, he would greatly prefer to have us clear up the Indochina matter as soon as possible.

Mr. Dunn stated that he believes that just now especially we should draw close to Great Britain and France - the strongest Western European countries (and we hope that France will be stronger and should try to help her). We should attempt to remove the sources of friction between France and the United States and should try to allay her apprehensions that we are going to propose that territory be taken away from her. We have no right to dictate to France nor to take away her territory. We can only use our influence with France and we should do so, for example, to bring France to improve the Government of Indochina and conditions there but we should not interfere.

Mr. Dunn emphasized his belief that now is the time for us to cooperate wholeheartedly with France. In this connection he referred to his recent conversation with Bidault in which the latter stressed his fears for Western civilization as a result of the dominance of Russia in Europe.

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JUN 24 1945



MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: American Policy with Respect to Indochina

General Observations

1. The Japanese aggression against the French in Indochina has brought about a marked increase in the number of proposals advanced by the French for the use of French forces and resources in the Pacific.
2. These proposals and recent military developments make it essential that the United States reach a definitive determination regarding its policy toward Indochina.
3. It is established American policy to aid France to regain her strength in order that she may be better fitted to share responsibility in maintaining the peace of Europe and of the world. It seems particularly important that at this time the United States should draw close to France and Great Britain, the strongest Western Powers, and attempt to remove the sources of friction between the United States and France, which include French apprehensions that we are going to propose that French territory be taken away. However, in pursuing this policy, the United States must not jeopardize its increasingly important interests in Southeast Asia and must take into account the dynamic forces leading towards self government in that area since social, economic or political instability may threaten the peace of the Far East and the world.
4. The United States Government has publicly taken the position that it recognizes the sovereign jurisdiction of France over French possessions overseas when those possessions are resisting the enemy, and has expressed the hope that it will see the re-establishment of the integrity of French territory. The surrender of Indochina to Japan, however, not only opened the way to Japanese conquest of southeastern Asia and the Indies but exposed China's southwestern flank in the midst of its war with Japan. Until recently there was active collaboration on the part of Indochina with the Japanese, but Japanese aggression in Indochina has now given rise to resistance on the part of local French and native elements.
5. Although President Roosevelt had in the past expressed his preference that Indochina should be placed under trusteeship, he nevertheless approved a statement issued by the Secretary of State on April 3, 1945 relative to the plans approved at Yalta which carried the clear implication that Indochina would only come under a proposed trusteeship structure through voluntary action by the French. The United States position that trusteeship should apply only to mandated and enemy territory and territories voluntarily placed under the system

C O P Y

by states responsible for their administration has been re-affirmed during the current discussions at San Francisco. It is abundantly clear that there is no possibility at the present time or in the foreseeable future that France will volunteer to place Indochina under trusteeship, or consent to any program of international accountability which is not applied to the colonial possessions of other powers.

6. French policies in Indochina before the war were unsatisfactory both as regards the Indochinese and as regards economic and commercial relations with other countries. There is increasing independence sentiment among the Indochinese and this movement appears to have at least the tacit support of China. There are indications, however, that the present French Government is embarking upon a new policy which is taking these factors into account. On several occasions in recent years, French authorities have issued policy statements on the future of Indochina. These follow a general trend toward greater autonomy for the French administration of Indochina but the most recent statement, that of March 24, 1945, is still vague and indicates little progress toward the establishment of genuine self rule for the Indochinese or of an open door economic policy in Indochina.

7. The economic policies pursued before the war by the French administration in respect to foreign trade with China through Haiphong and over the Yunnan railway affected adversely the economic developments of southwest China and foreign commerce with that region. Unless the situation is changed, this will be an increasingly important source of postwar friction.

8. The frontier between Indochina and Thailand is also a potential source of future trouble in southeastern Asia because it does not conform to ethnic and cultural groupings and involves conflicting historic claims.

#### Recommendations

In the light of the above considerations, the following recommendations are submitted for your approval.

1. The Government of the United States should make known to the French Provisional Government its concern for the future peace and stability of the Far East and its views as to how French action with respect to Indochina can contribute toward the maintenance of peace and stability. To that end the draft of a proposed telegraphic instruction to the American Ambassador at Paris is enclosed herewith. In this instruction the Ambassador is directed to seek the views of the French Government on five specific proposals which appear to be of chief importance for the future peace and stability of this area.



2. Pending the outcome of the proposed discussions in Paris the following procedure, which is in line with the known views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff will be followed:

(a) While avoiding so far as practicable unnecessary or long-term commitments with regard to the amount or character of any assistance which the United States may give to the French resistance forces in Indochina, this Government should continue to afford such assistance as does not interfere with the requirements of other planned operations. The French Provisional Government should be informed confidentially that owing to the need for concentrating all our resources in the Pacific on operations already planned, large-scale military operations aimed directly at the liberation of Indochina cannot be contemplated at this time. American troops should not be used in Indochina except in American military operations against the Japanese.

(b) French offers of military and naval assistance in the Pacific should be considered on their military merits as bearing on the objective of defeating Japan as in the case of British and Dutch proposals. There would be no objection to furnishing of assistance to any French military or naval forces so approved regardless of the theatre of operations from which the assistance may be sent provided such assistance does not involve a diversion of resources which the Combined or Joint Chiefs of Staff consider are needed elsewhere.



NO DISTRIBUTION

AMEMBASSY,

PARIS.

1. As you are aware, Japanese aggression against the French in Indochina has brought about a marked increase in the number of proposals advanced by the French for the use of French forces and resources in the Pacific.

2. In this connection and in order that we may be in a position more clearly to determine our policy with respect to Indochina it would be most helpful if you could obtain from the French Government a fuller explanation of its aims in respect of Indochina than was given in the statement of March 24. Although that statement showed a trend toward greater autonomy for the French administration of Indochina it nevertheless indicates little progress toward genuine self-rule for the Indochinese or the establishment of an open-door economic policy in Indochina.

3. Because the liberation of Indochina is in fact dependent upon the American defeat of Japan; because we are sacrificing lives and resources to assure peace and stability in the Far East, in the responsibility for post-war maintenance of which we will be obliged to accept a major share;

because without recognition of the dynamic trends toward self-government among the peoples of Asia there can be no peace and stability in the Far East and peoples of South-east Asia may embrace ideologies contrary to our own or develop a Pan-Asiatic movement against all Western Powers, we feel it is not unreasonable for the United States to ask that the French Government give some positive indication of its intentions in respect of the following questions, a satisfactory solution of which we feel is essential to insure peace and stability in the Far East.

a. Development of a Government to be run for and increasingly by the Indochinese themselves so that within a reasonable period Indochina may be fully self-governing and autonomous except in matters of imperial concern in which Indochina may wish to become a partner in French union. (For your guidance we believe that no policy will be successful which does not provide civil liberties for the Indochinese and concrete assurances to them that they will achieve this self-government in the early future).

b. Maintenance of equal economic and commercial opportunity for all nations and their nationals.

c. Establishment of Haiphong as a free port with unrestricted, tax-free transit between Haiphong and China.

d. Acceptance of a frontier between Indochina and Thailand to be determined by an impartial international commission after the war in an attempt to establish a border which will eliminate potential sources of unrest



and conflict in the future. (In this connection, you may inform the French that the United States hopes to see Thailand resume its status as a free, independent and sovereign nation but does not recognize Thailand's acquisition of territory from Indochina in 1941. This position, however, is without prejudice to future peaceful adjustments.)

c. Acceptance of such international security arrangements as may be determined to be necessary for international security in the Far East, including protection of China's southwestern flank.

4. In discussing the foregoing with the French Government you should make it clear that this Government is motivated by its great concern for the maintenance of peace and stability in ~~this vital area~~ <sup>the Far East</sup> and by its desire to work with the French Government towards these ends. We are confident that both Governments are desirous of achieving the same ends. It is hoped that by a demonstration of American interest in the fulfillment of the objectives set forth in paragraph three and by a recognition of the responsibility of the Powers primarily interested in this ~~area~~ <sup>region</sup>, the foundations of a mutual understanding of the several problems of the United Nations in that region may be laid and a post-war settlement achieved which will be acceptable to all and contribute to world peace.

5. For your information and such use as you may care to make of them during your discussions, the following recommendations

in regard to the military situation have been approved:

(a) While avoiding so far as practicable unnecessary or long-term commitments with regard to the amount or character of any assistance which the United States may give to French resistance forces in Indochina, this Government should continue to afford such assistance as does not interfere with the requirements of other planned operations. Owing to the need for concentrating all our resources in the Pacific on operations already planned, large-scale military operations aimed directly at the liberation of Indochina cannot, however, be contemplated at this time. American troops would not be used in Indochina except in American military operations against the Japanese.

(b) French offers of military and naval assistance in the Pacific should be considered on their military merits as bearing on the objective of defeating Japan as in the case of British and Dutch proposals. There would be no objection to furnishing of assistance to any French military or naval forces so approved regardless of the theatre of operations from which the assistance may be sent provided such assistance does not involve a diversion of resources which the Combined and Joint Chiefs of Staff consider are needed elsewhere.

DR:JCH:bright  
FOR:Shober:MSB  
6/8/46

FE

EF

STAMP

THE STATE-WAR-NAVY COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

May 2, 1945

WE

Mr. Bonbright,

Reference: SWNCC 35/10, "Suggested Reexamination  
of American Policy with Respect to  
Indo-China.

The Assistant Secretary of War proposes to  
amend paragraph 5, Part II, page 44, of SWNCC 35/10  
as follows:

"5. While avoiding specific, so far as  
practicable, unnecessary or long term  
commitments with regard to the amount or  
character of any assistance which the United  
States may give to the French resistance  
forces in Indo-China, this government should  
continue to afford all possible assistance,  
provided it does not interfere with the re-  
quirements of other planned operations."

DC/R
Assoc. of
Rev.
Gen.

  
R.E.C.

JUN 28 1954

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*The Acting Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Caffery)*

WASHINGTON, May 9, 1945—noon.

1949. Following telegram dated May 8 received from the Secretary at San Francisco,<sup>20</sup> is repeated for your information.

<sup>20</sup> The United Nations Conference on International Organization met at San Francisco from April 25 to June 26, 1945.

"The subject of Indo-China came up in a recent conversation I had with Bidault<sup>21</sup> and Bonnet. The latter remarked that although the

<sup>21</sup> Georges Bidault, French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

French Government interprets Mr. Welles' statement of 1942<sup>22</sup> concerning the restoration of French sovereignty over the French Em-

<sup>22</sup> For text of note dated April 13, 1942, from Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles to Ambassador Gaston Henry-Haye, see *Foreign Relations*, 1942, vol. II, p. 561, or Department of State *Bulletin*, April 18, 1942, p. 235.

pire as including Indo-China, the press continues to imply that a special status will be reserved for this colonial area. It was made quite clear to Bidault that the record is entirely innocent of any official statement of this government questioning, even by implication, French sovereignty over Indo-China. Certain elements of American public opinion, however, condemned French governmental policies and practices in Indo-China. Bidault seemed relieved and has no doubt cabled Paris that he received renewed assurances of our recognition of French sovereignty over that area."

GREW

740.0011 P.W./54547

*Memorandum by the Acting Secretary of State to President Truman*

WASHINGTON, May 16, 1945

With respect to General de Gaulle's message of May 15<sup>23</sup> concerning

<sup>23</sup> Annex to this memorandum.

his extreme desire to have French forces participate in the fight of American forces in the decisive campaign against Japan, a copy of which is enclosed, the following considerations are offered for possible use in your conversation with the French Foreign Minister and General Juin<sup>24</sup> now scheduled for tomorrow, May 17, for Mr. Bidault,

<sup>24</sup> Gen. Alphonse Pierre Juin, French Chief of General Staff, and May 18 for General Juin.

The question of the participation of both French military and naval forces in the Far East was raised by the Chief of the French Naval Mission in the United States<sup>25</sup> on March 20. When the Joint Chiefs

<sup>25</sup> Adm. Raymond Fernald.

of Staff referred the matter to the Department for an expression of views the Secretary of State replied on April 5 that acceptance of the proposals in principle was considered to be desirable from the point of view of relations with the French Provisional Government, subject of course to military requirements in the theatre of operations. It is understood that from the military point of view the use of French forces in that theatre has relatively little if any value. Until further

the Department of State should take up the question of prompt clarification of our policy on Indochina. In as much as the final determination of policy with respect to Indochina will probably involve and depend upon discussions with the French Government, and in as much as the Secretary of State has expressed the wish that these discussions should not be initiated at least while the present conference in San Francisco is in session, consideration of the matter has been restricted to the immediate implications of General de Gaulle's message to the effect that France wished to participate actively at the side of American forces in the campaign against Japan. This message was discussed with the French Foreign Minister by the President and by the Acting Secretary of State and referred to in the President's public statement<sup>2</sup> regarding his talks with M. Bidault. In the latter "the

<sup>2</sup> Released to the press May 18, Department of State Bulletin, May 20, 1945, p. 927.

President emphasized that we are faced with a still strong and deadly enemy in the Far East to whose defeat the total resources of this country, both in manpower and material, are pledged. He indicated that such assistance as France and our other Allies may bring to that struggle and which may be synchronized with operations already planned or underway, will be welcomed."

In the conversation which took place in the White House on May 19, 1945, the President referred to General de Gaulle's message and expressed his appreciation of France's offer of assistance. The President then said "that he had received a message from General de Gaulle to the effect that France would be glad to participate in the war against Japan alongside the United States and the President expressed his appreciation of France's offer of assistance. The President said that it is his policy to leave to the Commander-in-Chief in the field matters relating to the conduct of the war and that in this case also he would wish to leave to the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Army Forces, Pacific, the determination of whether it would

<sup>3</sup> General of the Army Douglas MacArthur.

be practicable and helpful to have French forces join with us in the operations against Japan. He indicated that such assistance as France and our other Allies might bring to the struggle in the Pacific, which would synchronize with operations already planned or under way, would be welcomed. The President thought that the question would depend in large measure on the problem of transport, and, as the Minister no doubt was aware, this was an important problem involving three times the amount of tonnage that had been used in the war in the Atlantic. This subject was not further pursued."

On the following day the same subject was again referred to in the following terms in a conversation between the Acting Secretary of State and the French Foreign Minister: "I mentioned that among the points which had been touched upon at the White House was that of French military assistance in the Far East in the war against Japan. I reminded Mr. Bidault that while the President had expressed his general approval to French military association with us in this theater, he had emphasized that the problem was a military one and would necessarily have to be judged on its merits by the military authorities. I said that in the circumstances it was up to

General MacArthur to decide just how much and where the French military contribution could be best utilized. The Minister mentioned that there were two French divisions ready for immediate transportation to the Far East. In reply to my inquiry as to whether there are Senegalese troops among them, he admitted that this was probably so, although there were also substantial numbers of white French. He made it clear that the French divisions could be utilized anywhere in the Far East, and there was no intention of limiting their contribution to attacking the enemy in Indochina. I reiterated that this matter would be placed before our military authorities immediately.

In as much as the Acting Secretary of State agreed that the matter would be placed before military authorities immediately, it is recommended that the foregoing be brought to the attention of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the earliest possible moment. In this connection, the following suggestions which are believed to be in harmony with the expressed views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff are put forward:

(a) While avoiding so far as practicable unnecessary or long-term commitments with regard to the amount or character of any assistance which the United States may give to French resistance forces in Indochina, this Government should continue to afford such assistance as does not interfere with the requirements of other planned operations. Owing to the need for concentrating all our resources in the Pacific on operations already planned, large-scale military operations aimed directly at the liberation of Indochina cannot, however, be contemplated at this time. American troops should not be used in Indochina except in American military operations against the Japanese.

(b) French offers of military and naval assistance in the Pacific should be considered on their military merits as bearing on the objective of defeating Japan as in the case of British and Dutch proposals. There would be no objection to furnishing of assistance to any French military or naval forces so approved, regardless of the theatre of operations from which the assistance may be sent, provided such assistance does not involve a diversion of resources which the Combined or Joint Chiefs of Staff consider are needed elsewhere.

II. FREEMAN MATTHEWS



TELEGRAM SENT

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, June 7, 1945  
7 p.m.

AMERICAN EMBASSY,

CHUNGKING, 873

FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM THE ACTING SECRETARY.

The President thanks you for your considered telegram in regard to the problems presented by the reestablishment of French control in Indochina and the British desire to reoccupy Hongkong and fully appreciates the difficulties in which you and General Wedemeyer may be placed on account of the lack of specific directives in respect to both of these problems which have been under careful study both here and in connection with the discussions at San Francisco.

I have also received your message No. 1543 of June 6 and regret that there has been delay in replying to your earlier one owing to the study which has been required of these matters in connection with present developments at the Conference. The President has asked me to say that there has been no basic change in the policy in respect to these two questions and that the present position is as follows:

The President assumes that you are familiar with the statement made by the Secretary of State on April 3, 1945 with the approval of President Roosevelt in which Mr. Stettinius declared that as a result of the Yalta discussions the "trusteeship structure, it was felt, should be defined to permit the placing under it of such of the territories taken from the enemy in this war, as might be agreed upon at a later date, and also such other territories as might voluntarily be placed under trusteeship". The position thus publicly announced has been confirmed by the conversations which are now taking place

in San Francisco

in San Francisco in regard to trusteeships. Throughout these discussions [the American delegation has insisted upon the necessity of providing for a progressive measure of self-government for all dependent peoples looking toward their eventual independence or incorporation in some form of federation according to circumstances and the ability of the peoples to assume these responsibilities. Such decisions would preclude the establishment of a trusteeship in Indochina except with the consent of the French Government. The latter seems unlikely. Nevertheless it is the President's intention at some appropriate time to ask that the French Government give some positive indication of its intentions in regard to the establishment of civil liberties and increasing measures of self-government in Indochina before formulating further declarations of policy in this respect.]

In the meantime the President has explained to the French Foreign Minister that whereas we welcome French participation in the war against Japan the determination of the extent that it would be practical and helpful to have French forces join with us in such operations must be left to the Commander in Chief, United States Army Forces, Pacific. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are at present engaged in a study of the possibilities of French help along the lines of the following suggestions:

(a) While avoiding so far as practicable unnecessary or long-term commitments with regard to the amount or character of any assistance which the United States may give to French resistance forces in Indochina, this Government should continue to afford such assistance as does not interfere with the requirements of other planned operations. Owing to the need for concentrating all our resources in the Pacific on operations already planned, large-scale military operations aimed directly at the liberation of Indochina cannot, however, be contemplated at this time. American troops should not be used in Indochina except in American military operations against the Japanese.

(b) French offers of military and naval assistance in the Pacific should be considered on their military merits as bearing on the objective of defeating Japan as in the case of

British .

British and Dutch proposals. There would be no objection to furnishing of assistance to any French military or naval forces so approved, regardless of the theatre of operations from which the assistance may be sent, provided such assistance does not involve a diversion of resources which the Combined or Joint Chiefs of Staff consider are needed elsewhere.

/s/ GMEV

Acting



JAPAN

6. We have agreed that provision British shipping for military purposes in Pacific as described above is more important than blow up of 18 Sam ships to carry troops and we expect to drop request for conversions.

7. If you have any comments or recommendations please cable soonest to Bissell London. Otherwise will assume you authorize Monroe to arrange for use of M. W. T. vessels on above basis for August loadings in U. K.

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Editor's Note.—For the final Conference texts on this subject, as included in the Report by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to the President and the Prime Minister, see *post*, pages 1464 ff.

FRENCH AND NETHERLAND PARTICIPATION IN THE WAR AGAINST JAPAN

No. 1288

J. C. S. Files

*Memorandum by the United States Chiefs of Staff*<sup>1</sup>

[BABELSBERG,] 16 July 1945.

C. C. S. 895

PARTICIPATION OF TWO FRENCH COLONIAL INFANTRY DIVISIONS IN FAR EASTERN OPERATIONS

There are attached (Enclosure "A") a memorandum in which the French propose to place a French corps of two infantry divisions under American command in the Pacific war and (Enclosure "B") a reply proposed by the United States Chiefs of Staff. Since the British Chiefs of Staff may have views as to the areas in which these French troops should be employed, though perhaps not under United States command, their comment or concurrence is requested. General MacArthur proposes, if the French corps is assigned to him, to use it in the main effort against Japan in late spring of 1946.

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<sup>1</sup> Considered by the Combined Chiefs of Staff at their 106th Meeting, July 19. See *ante*, p. 113.

[No. 1288]

[Enclosure A]

*The Chief of the French Military Mission in the United States (Brossin de Saint Didier) to the Chief of Staff, United States Army (Marshall)*

WASHINGTON, May 29, 1945.

No. 432/EM

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL GEORGE C. MARSHALL

Subject: French participation in Far Eastern operations

During conversations between President Truman and Mr. Bidault, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the French Provisional Government,<sup>2</sup> on the one hand, and President Truman, General Marshall and General Juin on the other, the principle of a French participation in the war against Japan was viewed favorably.

Following these conversations, the French Government puts at the entire disposal of the American command, for operations in the Far East, an army corps comprising two divisions, besides corps-supporting and service units.

This army corps should include:—

1) The 9th Colonial Infantry Division, already well trained, having taken a brilliant part in the French and German campaigns.

In order to be able to operate in the Pacific war zone, this division would only require certain transfers of personnel (replacement by volunteers of men unfit for overseas duty).

The above will be ready to be shipped by the end of June.

It seems advisable that the 9th Division receive its equipment in the theater of operations.

2) The 1st Colonial Infantry Division of the Far East, planned several months ago. This division, whose colored troops will be replaced by trained European volunteers, from the French 1st Army, will be ready by the end of July, provided it receives its equipment on time.

It is to be expected that the latter unit, in view of the previous training of its personnel, will be ready for combat duty a month after receipt of its equipment.

To save time, immediate delivery of its equipment is therefore suggested.

In case the above is delivered only in the theater of operations, a corresponding delay would be needed by the 1st Division, from the time of receipt of its equipment, to participate in actual combat.

3) Supporting units and services of the army corps would also be ready by the end of July. Details of its equipping will have to be worked out in accord with the American command.

This army corps being put at the entire disposal of the American command, it seems logical to the French General Staff to give its units

<sup>2</sup> See Department of State Bulletin, vol. xii, p. 927.

an organization similar to that of corresponding American units in the Far East.

It is therefore requested, in regard to divisions as well as to supporting army corps units and services, that the types of units to be organized, be exactly defined.

It is finally suggested, in order to facilitate further negotiations, that Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force, be authorized to deal directly with the French command in what concerns details of the matters herewith referred to.

A. M. BROSSIN DE SAINT DIDIER

[Enclosure B]

# DRAFT

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF THE FRENCH MILITARY MISSION TO THE UNITED STATES

1. With reference to your memorandum of 29 May 1945<sup>2</sup> addressed to the Chief of Staff, U. S. Army, the United States Chiefs of Staff accept in principle that portion of your proposal whereby the French Government puts at the entire disposal of the American command a French army corps of two infantry divisions, with corps-supporting and service units on the U. S. scale, for operations in the war against Japan. This acceptance in principle is with the understanding that the agreement on this matter with the French Government will include the following provisions:—

a. This French corps will be, both during the period of hostilities and in the post-hostilities readjustment period until released by the United States, subject to the complete command and control of the United States command in the same manner as a U. S. army corps.

b. Movement of the corps from France will be contingent upon the French corps having, in the opinion of the United States command, a combat efficiency based on United States standards.

c. Assurance that adequate trained replacements will be provided by the French Government as necessary.

d. Maximum use will be made of equipment provided under the North African and Metropolitan Rearmament Programs.

e. The implementation of this agreement including matters such as accompanying supporting and service units, provisions for equipment, and the planning and timing for the movement and employment of the corps will be in accordance with plans and arrangements to be determined by the United States military authorities who will deal directly with the French military authorities.

<sup>2</sup> Enclosure A, *supra*.



2. Pressing requirements for operations in the Pacific during the coming months make certain that it will not be possible to move this corps from France for at least several months after the dates you suggest, and it appears unlikely that this corps will be committed to operations prior to the spring of 1946.

3. The United States Chiefs of Staff will advise you further in this matter subsequent to the conclusion of a governmental agreement.

No. 1289

J. C. S. Files

*Memorandum by the United States Chiefs of Staff*<sup>1</sup>

[EABELSBERG,] 18 July 1945.

C. C. S. 842/2

FRENCH AND DUTCH PARTICIPATION IN THE WAR AGAINST JAPAN

The United States Chiefs of Staff recommend that the Combined Chiefs of Staff forward the enclosed memorandum to the French and Netherlands Representatives to the Combined Chiefs of Staff in lieu of the memorandum in the Enclosure to C. C. S. 842/1.<sup>2</sup>

[Enclosure]

DRAFT

MEMORANDUM TO THE FRENCH AND NETHERLANDS REPRESENTATIVES  
TO THE COMBINED CHIEFS OF STAFF<sup>3</sup>

The Combined Chiefs of Staff have given consideration to the question of French/Netherlands participation in the war against Japan and wish to inform you of their views which are as follows:—

a. While it is at present impracticable due chiefly to logistical difficulties for French or Netherlands armed forces to take a major part in the immediate operations in the Far East, the provision of such assistance which may be synchronized with operations will be taken into account by the Combined Chiefs of Staff. The use of such forces will depend solely on military considerations. French or Netherlands forces so accepted must operate under the complete control of the commander in chief concerned.

b. In implementing this policy the Combined Chiefs of Staff undertake to give the French/Netherlands representatives timely

<sup>1</sup> Considered by the Combined Chiefs of Staff at their 105th Meeting, July 18. See op't, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> Document No. 617, printed in vol. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Separate memoranda based on this text were dispatched to the French and Netherlands Representatives by the Combined Secretariat of the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington on July 18.

information of their intentions in respect of any operations that will directly affect French/Netherlands territories or armed forces in the Far East.

No. 1290

J. C. S. Files

*Memorandum by the British Chiefs of Staff*<sup>1</sup>

[BABELSBERG,] 18 July 1945.

C. C. S. 895/1

PARTICIPATION OF TWO FRENCH COLONIAL INFANTRY DIVISIONS IN  
FAR EASTERN OPERATIONS

1. We have examined the proposals by the United States Chiefs of Staff for the employment of two French colonial infantry divisions in Far Eastern operations, as set out in C. C. S. 895.<sup>2</sup>

2. In the light of the discussion at C. C. S. 194th Meeting held on 17 July 1945,<sup>3</sup> we suggest it would be preferable for the two French divisions to be employed in due course in French Indo-China.

3. The question of under whose command this force would operate would, we suggest, be decided in the light of the situation at the time.

<sup>1</sup> Considered by the Combined Chiefs of Staff at their 193th Meeting, July 19. See *ante*, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Document No. 1288.

<sup>3</sup> See *ante*, pp. 48-51.

No. 1291

J. C. S. Files

*Memorandum by the United States Chiefs of Staff*<sup>1</sup>

[BABELSBERG,] 19 July 1945.

C. C. S. 895/2

PARTICIPATION OF TWO FRENCH COLONIAL INFANTRY DIVISIONS IN  
FAR EASTERN OPERATIONS

The United States Chiefs of Staff have considered the comments of the British Chiefs of Staff in C. C. S. 895/1<sup>2</sup> as to the employment of the two French divisions and recommend that the enclosed memorandum be forwarded by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to the Chief of the French Military Mission to the United States in lieu of Enclosure "B" to C. C. S. 895.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Considered by the Combined Chiefs of Staff at their 196th Meeting, July 19. See *ante*, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Document No. 1290.

<sup>3</sup> Document No. 1293.

[No. 1291]

297524—C1—vol. 2—53

[Enclosure]

DRAFT

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF THE FRENCH MILITARY MISSION  
IN THE UNITED STATES<sup>4</sup>

The Combined Chiefs of Staff accept in principle your offer of a French corps of two infantry divisions to serve in the Pacific war on the understanding that:—

a. Whether the corps will serve under U. S. or British command and the area in which it will operate will be determined later.

b. Final acceptance of the corps will involve an agreement with the government concerned on basic matters including command, combat efficiency, replacements, and logistical support.

c. Maximum use will be made of equipment provided under the North African and Metropolitan Rearmament Program.

d. The time of movement will be in accordance with the priority of the operations in which it is to be used. Pressing shipping and other requirements for operations in the Pacific make certain that the corps cannot be moved from France for at least several months. Whether used in the main effort or in the South China Sea area, it will not be possible to commit it to operations prior to the spring of 1946.

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<sup>4</sup> This text was communicated to the Chief of the French Military Mission in a memorandum dispatched by the Combined Secretariat of the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington on July 19.



## FINAL DOCUMENTS

REPORT BY THE COMBINED CHIEFS OF STAFF, APPROVED  
BY THE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED  
STATES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

No. 1282

J. C. S. No.

*The Combined Chiefs of Staff to President Truman and Prime Minister  
Churchill<sup>1</sup>*

[BARRLSBERG, July 24, 1945.]

Enclosure to C. C. S. 900/3

REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER OF THE AGREED  
SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS REACHED BY THE COMBINED CHIEFS  
OF STAFF AT THE "TERMINAL" CONFERENCE

1. The agreed summary of conclusions reached at the TERMINAL  
Conference is submitted herewith.

### I. OVER-ALL OBJECTIVE

2. In conjunction with other Allies to bring about at the earliest  
possible date the unconditional surrender of Japan.

### II. OVER-ALL STRATEGIC CONCEPT FOR THE PROSECUTION OF THE WAR

3. In cooperation with other Allies to bring about at the earliest  
possible date the defeat of Japan by: lowering Japanese ability and  
will to resist by establishing sea and air blockades, conducting intensive  
air bombardment, and destroying Japanese air and naval strength;  
invading and seizing objectives in the Japanese home islands as the  
main effort; conducting such operations against objectives in other  
than the Japanese home islands as will contribute to the main effort;  
establishing absolute military control of Japan; and liberating  
Japanese-occupied territory if required.

4. In cooperation with other Allies to establish and maintain, as  
necessary, military control of Germany and Austria.

<sup>1</sup> Text as approved by Truman and Churchill on July 24. See also, p. 344.

III. BASIC UNDERTAKINGS AND POLICIES FOR THE PROSECUTION  
OF THE WAR<sup>2</sup>

5. The following basic undertakings are considered fundamental to the prosecution of the war:—

a. Maintain the security and war-making capacity of the Western Hemisphere and the British Commonwealth as necessary for the fulfillment of the strategic concept.

b. Support the war-making capacity of our forces in all areas, with first priority given to those forces in or designated for employment in combat areas in the war against Japan.

c. Maintain vital overseas lines of communication.

6. In order to attain the over-all objective, first priority in the provision of forces and resources of the United States and Great Britain, including reorientation from the European Theater to the Pacific and Far East, will be given to meeting requirements of tasks necessary to the execution of the over-all strategic concept and to the basic undertakings fundamental to the prosecution of the war.

The invasion of Japan and operations directly connected therewith are the supreme operations in the war against Japan; forces and resources will be allocated on the required scale to assure that invasion can be accomplished at the earliest practicable date. No other operations will be undertaken which hazard the success of, or delay, these main operations.

7. The following additional tasks will be undertaken in order to assist in the execution of the over-all strategic concept:—

a. Encourage Russian entry into the war against Japan. Provide such aid to her war-making capacity as may be necessary and practicable in connection therewith.

b. Undertake such measures as may be necessary and practicable in order to aid the war effort of China as an effective ally against Japan.

c. Provide assistance to such of the forces of liberated areas as can fulfill an active and effective role in the present war in accordance with the over-all strategic concept. Within the limits of our available resources assist co-belligerents to the extent they are able to employ this assistance in the present war. Having regard to the successful accomplishment of basic undertakings, to provide such supplies to the liberated areas as will effectively contribute to the capacity of the United Nations to prosecute the war against Japan.

<sup>2</sup> In the draft report to the President and the Prime Minister circulated on July 23 in the enclosure to C. O. S. 885/2, the following language constituted the complete text under this heading: "(The respective views of the United States and British Chiefs of Staff are set out in parallel columns in Appendix 'A')." For the text of appendix A to C. O. S. 885/2, see document No. 1283.

With the resolution of the differences of view set forth in appendix A to C. O. S. 885/2 (see ante, pp. 343-346), the subject matter of this appendix was dealt with in paragraphs 5, 6, and 7 of the body of the final report. This materialized the relating of the other appendices. Appendix B to C. O. S. 885/2 became appendix A to C. O. S. 885/3, as before.

d. In cooperation with other Allies conduct operations, if required, to liberate enemy-occupied areas.

#### IV. THE WAR AGAINST JAPAN

##### *Strategic Direction of the War*

8. We have discussed the strategic direction of the war against Japan and have agreed as follows:—

a. The control of operational strategy in the Pacific Theater will remain in the hands of the United States Chiefs of Staff.

b. The United States Chiefs of Staff will provide the British Chiefs of Staff with full and timely information as to their future plans and intentions.

c. The United States Chiefs of Staff will consult the British Chiefs of Staff on matters of general strategy on the understanding that in the event of disagreement the final decision on the action to be taken will lie with the United States Chiefs of Staff.

d. In the event the British Chiefs of Staff should decide that they cannot commit British troops in support of a decision made by the United States Chiefs of Staff as indicated in c. above, the British Chiefs of Staff will give to the United States Chiefs of Staff such advance notice of their decision as will permit them to make timely rearrangements.

e. In the event the U. S. S. R. enters the war against Japan, the strategy to be pursued should be discussed between the parties concerned.

##### *Operations in the Pacific*

9. We have taken note of the plans and operations proposed by the United States Chiefs of Staff in Appendix "A."

10. We have considered the scope and nature of British participation in operations in the Pacific area. Our conclusions are as follows:—

a. The British Pacific Fleet will participate as at present planned.

b. A British very long range bomber force of 10 squadrons, increasing to 20 squadrons when more airfields become available, will participate. There is little prospect that airfield space for more than 10 squadrons of this force will become available before 1 December 1945 at the earliest.

c. We have agreed in principle that a Commonwealth land force and, if possible, a small tactical air force, should take part in the final phase of the war against Japan, subject to the satisfactory resolution of operational and other problems. In addition, some units of the British<sup>3</sup> East Indies Fleet may also take part.

11. In connection with paragraph 10 c. above, we have agreed that the appropriate British commanders and staff should visit Admiral Nimitz and General MacArthur and draw up with them a plan for submission to the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

<sup>3</sup> The word "British" does not appear at this point in C. C. S. 900/2.



*Operations in Southeast Asia Command*

12. We have discussed the instructions that should be issued to the Supreme Allied Commander, Southeast Asia, and have agreed upon the terms of the directive in Appendix "B."

*Reallocation of Areas and Command in the Southwest Pacific and Southeast Asia Areas*

13. We have agreed in principle that that part of the Southwest Pacific Area lying south of the boundary described in Appendix "C" should pass from United States to British command as soon as possible. The British Chiefs of Staff have undertaken to obtain the agreement of the Australian, New Zealand, and Dutch Governments to these proposals and to investigate and report the earliest practicable date on which the transfer can be effected.

14. We consider it desirable that initially Admiral Mountbatten control operations undertaken in southern Indo-China since these are more closely related to those of Southeast Asia Command than to those of the China Theater. We are agreed that the best arrangement would be to include that portion of Indo-China lying south of latitude 16° north in Southeast Asia Command. This arrangement would continue General Wedemeyer's control of that part of Indo-China which covers the flank of projected Chinese operations in China, and would enable Admiral Mountbatten to prepare the ground in the southern half of Indo-China where any initial operations by him would develop.

We recommend that an approach to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek<sup>4</sup> be made by our two governments to secure his agreement to this arrangement.

At a later date it may prove to be desirable to place all or part of the remainder of Indo-China within the sphere of operations of the Southeast Asia Command.

*French and Dutch Participation in the War*

15. We have considered the arrangements which can be made for French and Dutch participation in the war against Japan and our conclusions are as follows:—

a. While it is at present impracticable due chiefly to logistical difficulties for French or Netherlands armed forces to take a major part in the immediate operations in the Far East, the provision of such assistance which may be synchronized with operations will be taken into account. The use of such forces will depend solely on military considerations. French or Netherlands forces so accepted must operate under the complete control of the commander in chief concerned.

<sup>4</sup> C. C. S. 900/2 reads: "an approach to the Generalissimo".

6. The French/Netherlands representatives will be given timely information of our intentions in respect of any operations that will directly affect French/Netherlands territories or armed forces in the Far East.

16. We have considered an offer by the French of a French corps of two infantry divisions to serve in the Pacific war and have agreed on the following reply:—

"a. Whether the corps will serve under U. S. or British command and the area in which it will operate will be determined later.

"b. Final acceptance of the corps will involve an agreement with the government concerned on basic matters including command, combat efficiency, replacements, and logistical support.

"c. Maximum use will be made of equipment provided under the North African and Metropolitan Recruitment Programs.

"d. The time of movement will be in accordance with the priority of the operations in which it is to be used. Pressing shipping and other requirements for operations in the Pacific make certain that the corps cannot be moved from France for at least several months. Whether used in the main effort or in the South China Sea area, it will not be possible to commit it to operations prior to the spring of 1946."

#### *Portuguese Participation in the War*

17. We have examined a report by an Anglo-American Military Mission which discussed with the Portuguese military authorities Portuguese proposals for participation in such operations as may eventually be conducted to expel the Japanese from Portuguese Timor. We have informed the State Department and the Foreign Office of our views, which are set out in Appendix "D."

#### *Information for the Russians Concerning the Japanese War*

18. We have discussed the policy to be followed by the British and the United States Chiefs of Staff in passing to the Russians information and intelligence concerning the Japanese war and have agreed as follows:—

a. The United States and British Chiefs of Staff will pass to the Russians such operational information and intelligence regarding the theaters in which they are respectively responsible as either may wish and without bargaining.

b. The United States and British Chiefs of Staff will consult together before passing to the Russians any information and intelligence other than operational. Neither party will pass to the Russians information or intelligence derived wholly or in part from the other party's sources without their consent.

Nanking Embassy Files: Telegram

*The President to the Ambassador in China (Hurley)*<sup>1</sup>

BERLIN, 1 Aug[ust 1945.]

## OPERATIONAL PRIORITY

Top secret from the President to Ambassador Hurley.

Please deliver the following message from me to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

"1. At the Potsdam Conference the Prime Minister of Great Britain and I, in consultation with the Combined Chiefs of Staff, have had under consideration future military operations in South-East Asia.

2. On the advice of the Combined Chiefs of Staff we have reached the conclusion that for operational purposes it is desirable to include that portion of French Indo-China lying south of 16° north latitude in the Southeast Asia Command. This arrangement would leave in the China Theater that part of Indo-China which covers the flank of projected Chinese operations in China and would at the same time enable Admiral Mountbatten to develop operations in the southern half of Indo-China.

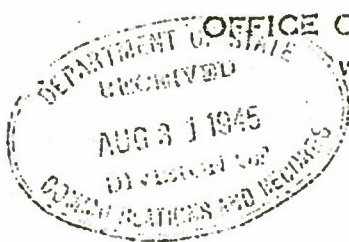
3. I greatly hope that the above conclusions will recommend themselves to Your Excellency and that, for the purpose of facilitating operations against the common enemy, Your Excellency will feel able to concur in the proposed arrangements.<sup>2</sup>

4. I understand that the Prime Minister of Great Britain is addressing a communication to Your Excellency in a similar sense.  
Signed Harry S. Truman."

<sup>1</sup> There is in the Truman Papers a typed draft of a telegram from Attlee to Chiang on which manuscript changes have been made to convert it into a message from Truman to Hurley which is substantially identical with the message here printed as received in Chungking.

<sup>2</sup> Chiang's reply was not received until after the conclusion of the Berlin Conference.

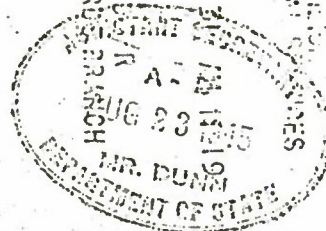
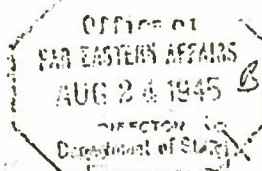




OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

22 August 1945



Honorable James C. Dunn  
Assistant Secretary of State  
Department of State

Dear Jimmy:

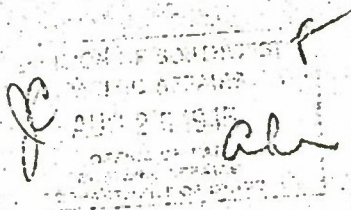
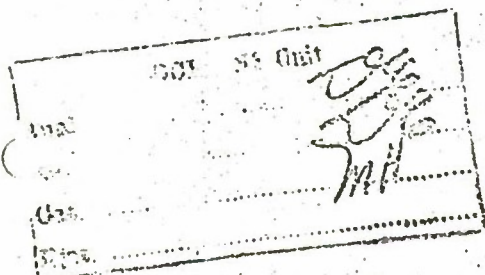
I think the Secretary will be interested in the enclosed message from the OSS representative in Kunming. Will you kindly see that it reaches his desk? Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

*Donovan*

William J. Donovan  
Director

Enclosure.



SEP 10 1945

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CS/LE

OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

22 August 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF STATE:

The OSS representative in Kunning has transmitted the following information concerning the French attitude toward the Indo-Chinese Provisional Government. The Provisional Government was the subject of our two memoranda of 21 August.

The French Government has decided to adopt a passive diplomatic attitude toward the reoccupation of Indo-China because of their inability to make an entry with a powerful show of arms. A committee of three has been appointed by the French Government in Paris, composed of the chief of the Kunning ISGR /French Intelligence Service/, the Minister of Colonies, and the Administrator General of Colonies. Its mission is to contact Annamite leaders and negotiate with them on terms favorable to the Indo-Chinese, according to Major Sainteny, who will represent the committee in Hanoi. The French policy will be one of liberal administration in the capacity of advisors to the Indo-Chinese Provisional Government, to be established by the Kuomintang Annamite and the Vietminh, which together form a committee of national liberation. (The Vietminh is a 100% Communist party, with a membership of approximately 20% of the active political native element. The Kuomintang Party comprises six minority parties and a score of independent ones.) The French Committee has been charged with the task of negotiating directly with Indo-Chinese leaders and deciding on the best means operandi. It has full powers of signing treaties in the name of France. The committee will in turn report to Paris, which retains the prerogative of making minor amendments to the general agreement. Annamite leaders in Kunning and representatives of the Central Liberation Committee recently from Hanoi, have expressed a desire to bring Ingin /Annam?/ in Indo-China under the status of an American protectorate, and are hoping that the US will intercede with the United Nations for the exclusion of the French, as well as Chinese, from the reoccupation of Indo-China.



Well-informed French and American sources state that the Central Committee has been negotiating with local Japanese military authorities for the purchase of guns and ammunition, with the intent of using them, should either the French or Chinese attempt to reoccupy their areas. The Indo-Chinese fear a Chinese reoccupation because they feel the Chinese will become squatters living off the land, pillaging, raping, and looting. The French concur in this opinion only in so far as to wish exclusive administrative rights for themselves. The leader of the Kuomintang Party in China and a direct representative of the Central Liberation Committee in Hanoi, made the following statement on 15 August:

"Should the French attempt to return to Indo-China with the intention of governing the country, and to act once more as oppressors, the Indo-Chinese people are prepared to fight to the end against any such reoccupation. On the other hand, if they came as friends to establish commerce, industry and without aspirations to governmental rule, they will be welcomed the same as any other foreign power. The Central Committee wishes to make known to the United States Government that the Indo-Chinese people first of all desire the independence of Indo-China, and are hoping that the United States, as a champion of democracy, will assist here in securing this independence in the following manner:

(1) Prohibiting, or not assisting the French to enter Indo-China; (2) keeping the Chinese under control, in order that looting and pillaging will be kept to a minimum; (3) sending technical advisors to assist the Indo-Chinese to exploit the resources of the land; and (4) developing those industries that Indo-China is capable of supporting.


"In conclusion, the Indo-Chinese would like to be placed on the same status as the Philippines for an undetermined period."

The French representative in Kunming, Major Sainteny, is now receiving material aid from the Section Liaison Francaise-Extrême Orient (SLFEO) Calcutta in making arrangements and readying personnel for the re-entry into Indo-China. His group were prepared to leave on the morning of 17 August. However, on arrival



at the airfield, they were confronted with Chinese and American military police posted about the plane, prohibiting them from leaving the airfield. In conversation later that day with Major Sainteny, he expressed the thought that the French had been betrayed by the Americans. He stated further that the Americans in China have right along been playing the Chinese game, although unwittingly. When questioned concerning his intentions from now on, he reluctantly stated there was nothing for the French to do but await instructions from Chungking. The French MGR in Kunming had infiltrated teams of men into Haiphong under the leadership of a Captain Blanchard. He has made contact with Lt. Col. Kamiya, former liaison officer between the Japanese military headquarters in Hanoi and Admiral Decoux' administration. Kamiya detained this team in Haiphong, confining their activities to transmitting messages concerning the surrender and meteorological data to the French headquarters in Kunming.

Reports from Kandy state that Col. Ross, Chief of the SLMO in Calcutta, is now en route to Saigon to take part in the Japanese surrender on the staff of the British representatives. With Col. Ross is Col. Fay, formerly French Air Attache in Kunming, whose exact status is undetermined, but who is a member of Lord Mountbatten's staff.

  
William J. Donovan  
Director

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Charge in China (Robertson)*

WASHINGTON, October 5, 1945—6 p. m.

1622. Following pertinent extracts from Dept 657 August 30, to New Delhi<sup>21</sup> for Bishop<sup>22</sup> are repeated for your information.

<sup>21</sup> Not printed.

<sup>22</sup> Max W. Bishop, Secretary of the American Commission at New Delhi.

"US has no thought of opposing the reestablishment of French control in Indochina and no official statement by US Govt has questioned even by implication French sovereignty over Indochina. However, it is not the policy of this Govt to assist the French to reestablish their control over Indochina by force and the willingness of the US to see French control reestablished assumes that French claim to have the support of the population of Indochina is borne out by future events."

ACHESON

*The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

PARIS, October 12, 1945—7 p. m.

[Received October 13—1:30 a. m.]

6066. My 5964, October 10.<sup>23</sup> Last night's semi-official *Le Monde*

<sup>23</sup> Not printed.

gives further details re Franco-British agreement on Indochina. *Le Monde* states agreement will not be published at this time but that principal provisions are known.

In the agreement French Civil Administration is recognized as sole authority in that part of Indochina south of 16th parallel. Only exceptions result from presence of British troops in this part of Indochina and these exceptions do not affect principles of agreement. *Le Monde* adds agreement is designed to determine relations between French Civil Administration and British military authorities and provides that British Commander will not intervene in civil affairs except through French authority. Latter in Turkey agree to fulfill any requests arising from presence of British troops. Agreement provides British troops will only be there temporarily for purpose of enforcing terms of Jap surrender and to assure repatriation of Allied prisoners and civilian internees.

It is again emphasized that cordial atmosphere of negotiations was indication of solidarity of Franco-British relations in that part of the world.

Sent Department as 6066, repeated London as 748.

CAFFERY

*The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

Paris, November 28, 1945.

[Received November 28—4:05 p. m.]

6857. Speaking of Indochina Chauvel<sup>21</sup> said that when trouble

<sup>21</sup> Jean Chauvel, Secretary-General to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, with the Annamites broke out de Gaulle had been urged by the French Mission in India to make some sort of policy statement announcing France's intention to adopt a far-reaching progressive policy designed to give the native population much greater authority, responsibility and representation in govt. De Gaulle considered the idea but rejected it because in the state of disorder prevailing in Indochina he believed that no such policy could be implemented pending restoration of French authority and would therefore just be considered by everyone as "merely more fine words". Furthermore de Gaulle and the Foreign Minister believe that the present situation is still so confused and they have so little information really reliable on the overall Indochina picture that such plans and thoughts as they held heretofore may have to be very thoroughly revised in the light of recent developments.

Despite the fact that the French do not feel that they can as yet make any general statements outlining specific future plans for Indochina, Chauvel says that they hope "very soon" to put into operation in certain areas programs including local elections which will be designed to grant much greater authority and greater voice in affairs to the natives. This he said would be a much better indication of the sincerity of French intentions than any policy statement.

In this connection he said that Admiral d'Argenlieu<sup>22</sup> is in touch

<sup>22</sup> Adm. Thierry d'Argenlieu, Governor General of French Indochina, with the King of Cambodia and the latter has indicated that he has no hostility to the French (but on the contrary apparently fears both Annamite and Siamese aspirations). The French hope soon to negotiate an agreement with him which will result in the granting of much greater responsibility and authority to the Cambodians. He mentioned specifically that there would be many more natives integrated into the local administrative services and it was also hoped that local elections could soon be held. The French he said intend to follow the same procedure in Laos when the situation permits and eventually also in Annam and Tonkin. When order is restored throughout Indochina and agreements have been reached with the individual states



Chauvel said the French intend to embody the results of these separate agreements into a general program for all of Indochina.

Insofar as the Chinese are concerned Chauvel said that he does not believe they are encouraging the Annamites who have a hearty dislike of the Chinese nor does he believe they have any territorial aspirations in Indochina. On the other hand he thinks the Chinese are definitely trying to get the maximum "squeeze" from the French in the form of occupational costs for their army, et cetera (my 6875, November 26.<sup>39</sup>)

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<sup>39</sup>Not printed.

He also mentioned the economic negotiations with the Chinese relating to Indochina and said that the French are perfectly agreeable to the establishing of free ports for the Chinese with certain transit rights and use of railways, et cetera in Tonkin where they would be of real use but the Chinese are demanding free port and transit rights for the whole of Indochina. Furthermore, the Chinese are desirous of obtaining title to the northern section of the Indochinese Yunnan Railway. Chauvel was not inclined to place any great importance of [on] these differences of opinion and thought that agreement will be reached.

CAFFERY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
OFFICE OF EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
DIVISION OF WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

January 18, 1946.

U

Mr. Acheson:

As you know we have been following a policy by which we will not permit the French to buy armament and military maintenance supplies for use in Indochina. The British military authorities in Indochina have now asked permission to turn over to the French some 800 jeeps and trucks which had been given to the British under Lend-Lease, and which are now in Indochina. The British state that the French must have this equipment so that they can maintain order in Indochina when they have taken over from the British. Our own military authorities have recommended approval of the British request. The French, and no doubt the British also, will be very much upset if we refuse to permit this transfer. However, in the light of our recently adopted policy we may be subjecting ourselves to criticism if we permit this transfer for the purposes stated, i.e., maintenance of order.

I would appreciate having your direction as to the response which we should make to the military.

H. Freeman Matthews

WE:PTC

Handwritten note by Acheson

EUR Mr. Matthews.

I discussed this with the President who thought that we should agree to the transfer. He pointed out that this does not bring any new equipment into the area and that to remove the trucks and jeeps would be impracticable.

DA.

## FRENCH INDOCHINA

### THE INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES IN NATIONALIST OPPOSITION TO RESTORATION OF FRENCH RULE IN INDOCHINA<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For previous documentation on the future of Indochina, see *Foreign Relations*, 1945, vol. vi, pp. — ff.

8516.00/1-2446: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Assistant Chief of the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs (London), Then at Saigon*

WASHINGTON, January 28, 1946—noon.

Please proceed Hanoi, remaining such time as you consider necessary, and report to Dept as fully as possible on conditions northern Indochina and especially on any French-Viet Minh negotiations. D'Argenlieu<sup>2</sup> understood to have stated privately that French negotia-

<sup>2</sup> Adm. Thierry d'Argenlieu, High Commissioner of French Indochina. tions with Ho Chi Minh<sup>3</sup> have been proceeding since late Nov and

<sup>3</sup> "President of the Provisional Government of Vietnam Democratic Republic". satisfactory agreement anticipated by end of Jan. Other reports deny existence negotiations. D'Argenlieu also reported to have expressed personal willingness accept Philippine model for Annam with independence at end 30 years. Urtel from Saigon received Jan 24<sup>4</sup> ap-

<sup>4</sup> Not printed, but see paragraph 2 of telegram 182, January 30, 6 p. m., to Chungking, p. —.

preciated. Please try to secure maximum information details French or Annamese economic agreements with Chinese and status of such agreements.

SSU exploring possibility for SSU representative proceed Hanoi. Reed<sup>5</sup> expected Saigon end of Feb.

<sup>5</sup> Charles S. Reed, 2d, Consul assigned to Saigon.

BYRNES

8516.00/1-3046

*Memorandum of Conversation, by Mr. Richard L. Sharp, of the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs*

RESTRICTED

[WASHINGTON.] January 30, 1946.

Participants: Brigadier General Philip E. Gallagher, War Department;

Colonel Vittrup, War Department Liaison;

Mr. Charles S. Reed, FSO;

Mr. Woodruff Wallner, WE;

Mr. Abbot Low Moffat, SEA;

Mr. R. L. Sharp, SEA.

<sup>1</sup> Chief, Division of Southeast Asian Affairs.



Asked when, in his opinion, the Chinese would get out of Indochina, General Gallagher said that General Lu Han <sup>7/</sup> had told him the

<sup>7/</sup> Commanding General of Chinese armed forces in Indochina.

Chinese would move out when the job given them by the Allies was completed. General Gallagher said he thought they really intend to do this although the whole matter depends upon the removal of the Japanese. To date, shipping for this purpose has not been available but now it is understood that United States bottoms will be used. The question is, therefore, when will such ships be allocated. General Gallagher said he had recommended to General Wedemeyer <sup>8/</sup> that high priority should be given such allocation.

<sup>8/</sup> Lt. Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer, Commanding General, U.S. Forces, China Theater, and concurrently Chief of Staff, China Theater.

There are some 20 to 30 thousand Japanese in Haiphong and the Do Son Peninsula. No political settlement can be reached in Indochina until the Chinese move out and they cannot do that until the Japanese are repatriated. General Gallagher added that he thought US army teams would have to be put into Indochina to concentrate and prepare the Japanese for evacuation.

General Gallagher was asked whether he knew of any arrangement whereby French forces moving into the north would overlap departing Chinese forces. He replied that in December Sainteny <sup>9/</sup> said that no French would enter until

<sup>9/</sup> Jean Sainteny, French Commissioner of Tonkin and North Annam.

the Chinese left. General Gallagher thought the French were probably not getting very far in negotiating with the Chinese on problems connected with their removal. Unless in the meantime something has been arranged between the French and the Chinese, the French would probably infiltrate overland from the south rather than land in force in northern ports.

General Gallagher pointed out that little love was lost between the Chinese and the French; that the presence of the American group in Hanoi restrained anti-French Chinese action; and that he himself had influenced General Lu Han to bring Sainteny and Ho Chi Minh together and confront both with a strong directive that order must be maintained. The existence of a vacuum in the north with neither French nor Chinese troops present would be extremely dangerous, as the Annamese would react strongly against all French in the area, who would be helpless in protecting themselves. To take over successfully, the French would need a sufficient force to cover the whole north. One or two modern French divisions could, in General Gallagher's opinion, defeat the Annamese.

In response to the question whether the French could do more than take key cities, he admitted that the Annamese would take to the hills and continue guerrilla warfare. Even in Saigon, he pointed out, things are far from peaceful despite British and French claims to the contrary. Establishment of French control could be speeded up if they were able to make large-scale air drops throughout the north. The Annamese, however, are well organized and, so far as small arms go, are quite well armed, although they have no navy, shore batteries and probably little artillery.

The question was raised whether the French mission in Hanoi was in fact negotiating with Ho Chi Minh. General Gallagher replied that the Viet Minh Provisional Government was at first willing to negotiate; then in October, after de Gaulle's<sup>10</sup> pronouncements on

<sup>10</sup>Gen. Charles de Gaulle, President of the Provisional Government of the Republic of France until January 26.

colonial policy, the Annamese refused to negotiate with the French and reacted vigorously against all French nationals in Hanoi. The Chinese may succeed in putting in a less anti-French Annamese government so that negotiation might go forward. All French efforts to stimulate a palace revolution against Ho were of no avail. Ho himself will not deal with the French. The Viet Minh is strong and, regardless of possible superficial changes in the Provisional Government, Ho will be behind any continuing Annamese movement. General Gallagher said that Sainteny had told him he expected peaceful agreement between the French and the Annamese would be reached by negotiation.

General Gallagher was asked how effective the Viet Minh administration would be with neither French nor Chinese forces present. He replied that on the whole he was impressed by the remarkably effective Annamese administration. There was an able personnel; they were all enthusiastic and young, but there were too few of them. Whatever their technical skill, they perhaps lack executive ability and experience since the technical services in Hanoi were at first very well run but gradually deteriorated. Trained people for the government and at the municipal level are lacking. In General Gallagher's opinion the Annamese are not yet ready for self-government and in full-fledged competition with other nations they would "lose their shirts". However, the demand for independence is widespread and even in the villages the peasants refer to the example of the Philippines.

Ho is willing to cooperate with Great Britain, USSR, or the United States and would perhaps even settle for French tutelage if that were subordinated to control by the other nations. French control alone, however, will be strongly resisted. The deep-seated hatred for the French has been fanned by exceedingly clever Viet Minh propaganda.

General Gallagher was asked whether the Annamese were realistic regarding their ability to stand up against French military force. While they are too enthusiastic and too naive, he said, they probably know that they will be licked. They are strong on parades and reiterate their willingness "to fight to the last man", but they would be slaughtered and they have been told that and probably know it. The Annamese would be no match for forces with modern arms even if they themselves have some, which they may have since the Chinese found no Japanese rolling artillery and numerous Japanese anti-aircraft guns seem to have completely disappeared. United States Army representatives never did learn the extent of arms controlled by the Viet Minh. Certainly the Chinese are not turning Japanese arms over to them. Before V-J Day the Japanese undoubtedly had armed and trained many Annamese. A Japanese general claimed they had taken over on March 9 simply because the French could no longer control the Annamese, but this statement General Gallagher characterized as a lie. He had heard that under the pretext of arming Annamese gendarmes for police duty in Hanoi, the Japanese had actually armed three distinct contingents, dismissing each group when armed and

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bringing in a new one to be armed and trained. Furthermore, the Annamese had acquired Japanese arms from armories which had been opened. General Gallagher did not know whether or not Tai Li<sup>11</sup> was sending arms to the Viet Minh.

<sup>11</sup> Deputy Director, Bureau of Investigation and Statistics, Chinese National Commission of Military Affairs.

General Gallagher was asked whether the presence of French hostages in the north would restrain French forces when they enter the region. He pointed out that only a few French civilians had been removed by air. All the rest, besides some five thousand disarmed French troops, were still to be removed. The Chinese cannot take them out nor would Lu Han even permit their evacuation to the Do Son Peninsula. Their presence had been a constant restraining influence on Sainteny. Asked whether the Annamese would let these French be evacuated, General Gallagher replied that they would have to if the Chinese were still there, but that these French nationals would be a real problem if the Chinese were moved out. The American Army group had to exert considerable pressure on the Chinese to get them to give any freedom at all to French civilians in Haiphong, Hué and other centers besides Hanoi. However, the Chinese and French alone had arranged for shipments of food from the south. The American group, incidentally, had to intervene to prevent the monopoly by the French of such food or of food distributed by the U.S. Army. The French nationals could be evacuated from Hongai and Tourane by the United States when the Japanese were removed if the Chinese would concentrate them at those ports. However, General Gallagher noted, that would place us in a position of working against the Annamese.

Originally, General Gallagher explained, the French expected the United States to play the same role in the north that the British were playing in the south. When they found us neutral they became more and more antagonistic and did everything possible to persuade United States personnel to favor the French position. They had no appreciation of the actual help which the American group gave to the prisoners of war and some of the civilian French in the form of food, medical aid, and so on. The Annamese, too, expected American help originally, having been thoroughly indoctrinated with the Atlantic Charter and other ideological pronouncements. In our neutral role we were thus a disappointment to both sides.

In response to a question, General Gallagher gave his opinion that Lu Han would be faithful to Chungking although as governor of Yunnan he would also be influenced to maintain as fully as possible relations between Yunnan and north Indochina which would be profitable to him.

General Gallagher said that the half dozen or so top French military officers held by the Japanese had been returned to France shortly after Sainteny reached Hanoi. He did not know what had happened to Devoux.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Vice Adm. Jean Devoux, Governor of French Indochina, became a prisoner of war of Japan in March 1945.

Asked how "communist" the Viet Minh were, General Gallagher replied that they were smart and successfully gave the impression of not being communist. Rather, they emphasized their interest in in-



dependence and their Annamese patriotism. Their excellent organization and propaganda techniques, General Gallagher pointed out, would seem to have the earmarks of some Russian influence. General Gallagher stated that the minority Cao Dai group were definitely Communist. In his opinion, however, the Viet Minh should not be labeled full-fledged doctrinaire communist.

At the present time the Hanoi radio is controlled by the Chinese so that there is communication between Hanoi and Saigon. A British military and civilian liaison team was sent to Hanoi and a Chinese counterpart to Saigon. The British in Hanoi at first made little progress with the Chinese but General Gallagher understands they have since made more headway.

The Chinese 30th Army in the south of the Chinese zone and the 93rd Army around Hanoi, both totalling some 50 thousand men, have been told to concentrate for removal to Manchuria, but whether they have actually moved out or not General Gallagher does not know. By December, however, the Chinese 53rd Army had begun to come in from Yunnan and would probably provide replacements for the other two Armies.

General Gallagher noted that magnetic mines have not been entirely cleared at least from the northern ports and that the threat provided by these mines has helped and would continue to help keep the French from undertaking large-scale landing operations in that area. He felt that regular rail communications between Saigon and Hanoi might not be opened for another year.

*The Assistant Chief of the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs (London) to the Secretary of State*

SECRETARY

SAIGON, February 5, 1946.

[Received February 5--5:05 p. m.]

War Series Saig 0027. Reference Wash 00067. We are already in position to shed some light on questions asked.

1. D'Argenson-Ho Chi Minh negotiations have in fact been going on since November. These negotiations looking toward French recognition of independence for Annamite to be worked out somewhat along Philippine lines. I have no knowledge of period time contemplated. Negotiations would probably have been completed by now but for Leclerc raising an objection. He told the Admiral's Council that if these negotiations succeeded the French might as well leave Indochina altogether. He recommended military reconquest and state[d] HQS Army was all ready for it. Nevertheless negotiations were later resumed and are continuing between Ho Chi Minh and Sainteny who is French Commissioner for Tonkin. Hope they will be completed in 2 or 3 weeks.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> This paragraph was reported by the Department in its telegram 630, February 7, 1946, 1 p. m., to Paris, not printed.

2. There are no Chinese economic agreements with the Annamites.

3. Reference Franco-Chinese agreements nothing formal yet. Temporary and local agreements are as follows:

a. In north French pay in piastres for maintenance of Chinese troops. These payments considered as advances on amounts French are supposed to receive as war damage from Japanese.

b. Small part of these piastre advances is supposed to be used for withdrawal of some Chinese gold units at official rate.

c. Chinese Government advances gold units which are freely convertible into Chinese national dollars for expenses of French representatives in Chungking, Kuanming and Shanghai. Such advances are only fraction of amount French are paying for Chinese troops.

d. There is an agreement for exchange of Hanoi coal for Cochin China rice. Due to lack of shipping and troubles of various sorts the volume of exchange under this agreement has been disappointingly low.

4. Clarac now in Chungking laying groundwork for important agreements. Among other things following are contemplated:

a. Yunnan-Haiphong Railway will be operated jointly by Chinese.

b. Haiphong will become free port.

c. French will exchange all live (*sic*) hundred piastre notes held by Chinese military. This will be very profitable to Chinese who have been buying them up all over country at depreciated prices.

d. Chungking with assistance of Chinese Consul Saigon is now preparing list of existing French laws and practices which tend to discriminate against Chinese businessmen in Indo-China. Principal complaints are poll tax, other discriminatory taxes, discrimination in amounts of money allowed to be exported, import difficulties and allegedly unfair distribution of rationed goods. French indicate willingness to consider adjusting these points.

[LONDON]

*The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

Paris, February 6, 1946—9 p. m.

[Received February 7—12:45 a. m.]

595. Dept's 564, February 4. While I have not as yet detailed information on the differences of opinions between D'Argenlieu and Leclerc on French policy toward Indo-China all indications in Paris point to the fact that the French Govt at this time favors a conciliatory and moderate policy. The Foreign Office has been stressing to the Govt the fact that in the light of the evolution of events in the Far East and Southeast Asia, French interests can best be safeguarded by a liberal and progressive colonial policy in Indo-China. The Socialist Party, which at present is in a position to exercise much influence on French governmental policy, is also in favor of such a policy as is the present Socialist Minister of Colonies, Marius Moutet. This does not mean, however, that they are thinking in terms of independence for Indo-China for no Frenchmen appear to be thinking in such terms.

While it is, of course, impossible at this time to gaze too far into the future, present evidence would seem to indicate that the present Govt will try to follow a conciliatory and moderate policy in Indo-China and will be more progressive in its outlook than the de Gaulle Govt.<sup>16</sup> As the Dept is aware, in the latter Govt the influence of

<sup>16</sup> Ambassador Caffery reported in telegram 840, February 21, 1946, 3 p. m., that the French Government had decided to give Admiral d'Argenlieu, then on a visit to Paris, "general authority to endeavor to reach a solution with the native elements, meeting them much more than half way". (5516.00-2146)

certain old-line military leaders sometimes had an unfortunate influence on French colonial policy.

CAFFERY

5516.00 2-1646: Telegram

*The Assistant Chief of the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs (Landon) to the Secretary of State*

HANOI, February 16, 1946.

PRIORITY

[Received February 20—10:31 a. m.]

2. From Landon for Moffat and Culbertson: "Chinese informally

<sup>17</sup> Paul T. Culbertson, Chief, Division of Western European Affairs.

state that French are negotiating two instrument[s] at Chungking:

1. An agreement in regard to Chinese troops in Indochina.
2. A treaty of commerce: That the agreement touches on:

a. The amount to be paid the Chinese by the French to cover troop expenses in Indochina.

b. Help to be given French troops by Chinese to reestablish themselves in Tonkin.

c. Time and method of withdrawal of Chinese troops. It is believed that French want Chinese to withdraw *in toto* at once and to coordinate their withdrawal with French entry while Chinese want to withdraw piecemeal over an extended period. In this connection 93rd Army began withdrawing on 15 February when 18th Division started marching toward Nanking; that about every 10 days another division will begin march until all of 93rd Army exits. Ho Chi Minh



beginning exit and about 5,000 French troops from China now at Laichau near Laokay railroad to Hanoi. He stated that although French troops supposed headed for Laos nothing to prevent their entraining any day for Hanoi for *coup d'etat*. Ho Chi Minh did not seem to fear French troops at Laichau. Other Annamese express belief Annamese capable of disarming Chinese troops in Tonkin. It seems certain that Annamese plan desperate resistance to French. Ho Chi Minh stated that he considering petitioning all United Nations to mediate Annamese independence and prevent extensive bloodshed. In this connection Chinese state that heavy loss of lives seems inevitable and that they would like to refer Indochina situation to UNO but cannot do so because of Chinese position in regard to Manchuria. The alleged Sino-French treaty of commerce said by Chinese to be stalled over question of status of Chinese in Indochina. Chinese require most favored nation treatment for Chinese nationalists on Chinese basis of citizenship namely *ius-sanguinis*. This treaty of commerce supposed to include concessions by French to Chinese of:

1. Free access to port of Hanoi.
2. Joint control of Haiphong-Yunnan railroad.
3. Joint share of profits on China end of line.
4. Duty free transit of goods consigned to China.

These concessions based on Chinese claim of heavy losses due to French permission to Annamese to use Tonkin as base attack China. French Major Sainteny optimistic over quick agreement with China although Claret's return delayed indefinitely. Sainteny intimated that although not formally stated [*stated?*] the treaty of commerce will be contingent on Chinese troops' assistance and coordination.

[LONDON]

*The Assistant Chief of the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs  
(London) to the Secretary of State*

HANOI, undated.

[Received February 27—11:45 a. m.]

From London for Moffat and Culbertson.

1. Sainteny stated that in conversation with Ho Chi Minh he offered Annamese complete independence within French community: That this meant that Annamese would have benefit of French advisers in every department of Government: That for instance Annamese Foreign Office would express its policies through French channels: That Annamese Army and War Ministry would be coordinated with French Army and War Ministry: And that Annamese if [in?] Finance and Commerce Ministries would heed French advisers as Annamese were inexperienced in these matters and might jeopardize [apparent garble] French investment. Sainteny said that Annamese in Cochinchina would probably prefer to remain French Colony rather come under northern Annamese Government. In this connection Ho Chi Minh said that French officials had conferred with him but that they were vague in their comments and had avoided the real issues of Annamese independence so that he had asked them to get specific terms from Paris which would make clear whether the French really offered Annamese independence or were merely using new language to describe usual French control Annamese affairs.

2. Ho Chi Minh handed me two letters addressed to President of USA, China, Russia, and Britain, identical copies of which were stated to have been forwarded to other governments named. In two letters Ho Chi Minh requests USA as one of United Nations to support idea of Annamese independence according to Philippines example, to examine the case of the Annamese, and to take steps necessary to maintenance of world peace which is being endangered by French efforts to reconquer Indochina. He asserts that Annamese will fight until United Nations interfere in support of Annamese independence. The petition addressed to major United Nations contains:

a. Review of French relations with Japanese where French Indochina allegedly aided Japs:

b. Statement of establishment on 2 September 1945 of [Provisional Government of?] Democratic Republic of Viet Minh:

c. Summary of French conquest of Cochinchina begun 23 Sept 1945 and still incomplete:

d. Outline of accomplishments of Annamese Government in Tonkin including popular elections, abolition of undesirable taxes, expansion of education and resumption as far as possible of normal economic activities:

e. Request to four powers: (1) To intervene and stop the war in Indochina in order to mediate fair settlement and (2) to bring the Indochinese issue before the United Nations Organization. The petition ends with statement that Annamese ask for full independence in fact and that in interim while awaiting UNO decision the Annamese will continue to fight the reestablishment of French imperialism. Letters and petition will be transmitted to Department soonest.

[LONDON]

CHUNGKING, February 28, 1946—5 p. m.

US URGENT

[Received 11:12 p. m.]

394. Embassy's 280, February 13.<sup>a</sup> This afternoon Dr. Wang

<sup>a</sup> Not printed, but see telegram of February 19 to Saigon, p. —.

Shih-chieh, Minister for Foreign Affairs, called me to Foreign Office and said that Sino-French treaty on Indochina would be signed at 4 p. m. today. He said main points in treaty were as given to me by Vice Minister Lin Chieh on February 12.

Dr. Wang said that Chinese forces would hand over control of their area in Indochina at end of March. Chinese troops would withdraw from Indochina at end of March. Chinese troops would withdraw from Indochina during March, by sea and land, but due to difficulties of shipping and of withdrawal by land, Chinese forces would probably not be able to complete withdrawal until a short time after end of March, not later, he felt sure, than April 15.

He said that Chinese Government had informally but emphatically urged French authorities to reach a "bloodless" agreement with the Indochinese; he expressed opinion that present French Government is less intransigent than that of de Gaulle. He said that Chinese in Indochina had also urged the Indochinese to reach a "bloodless" agreement with French.

Dr. Wang said that the Chinese Government would be willing to mediate between French and Indochinese, if requested by both sides. He then asked me to ascertain the views of the Secretary of State regarding the possibility of joint Chinese-American mediation, if requested by both French and Indochinese. He referred to the great interest which the late President Roosevelt had shown in dependent peoples, remarking that due to opposition from certain countries, the President had been unable to establish trusteeship principle for colonies of European powers. He indicated that, if US Government should agree to joint mediation, the matter of requesting such mediation could be "suggested" to the French and Indochinese. Dr. Wang commented that, as result of Chinese actions during recent months, he felt that French were convinced of Chinese good faith.

Dr. Wang expressed opinion that, if joint Chinese-American mediation is agreed upon, it should be undertaken during the coming month. He said that he would appreciate very much receiving the views of the Secretary of State as soon as possible.

Smyth



Saigon, March 7, 1946—7 p. m.  
[Received March 7—1:35 p. m.]

20. Spokesman for the Government in Indochina announced signing of agreement yesterday at Hanoi whereby Vietnam becomes a free state within the Indochina federation and will have own army, direct own internal affairs and finances. Further negotiations on other points such as foreign affairs, French economic interests, et cetera, to be held shortly. Referendum to be held in Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina to determine form of government desired and they may be separate or may unite. Full text of agreement will be forwarded.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Telegram 21, March 8, 1946, not printed. Despatch 4614, March 8, from Paris, enclosed copy of text as translated from the Paris *Figaro*, of the preliminary convention signed at Hanoi, March 6, at 5 p. m.; neither printed.

Spokesman concluded that many concessions on both sides, Annamites are frankly pleased and French military occupation now proceeding smoothly.

REED

Saigon, March 14, 1946—5 p. m.  
[Received March 16—9:24 a. m.]

33. Information from north indicates Chinese putting many obstacles in way of French, and Saigon press queries Chinese intentions. Clarac reviewed worsening situation in detail, mentioning unexpected last minute refusal Chinese General Staff to sign agreement for relief Chinese by French (to begin before March 15, to end before March 31) because needed approval Combined Chiefs of Staff. This has been [apparent garble] but Clarac not clear if they have acted, also adding MacArthur<sup>26</sup> had said it was not his business which Clarac found

<sup>26</sup> General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Forces, Japan.

astonishing in view of Mountbatten's<sup>27</sup> approval of relief British by

<sup>27</sup> Adm. Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander, Southeast Asia. French south of 16th [parallel]. He is worried as Chinese digging trenches Haiphong and encircling citadel. Hanoi fears serious clash but hopes Lu Han's arrival yesterday may ease tension, also Lu may have authority to implement relief agreement.<sup>28</sup> Clarac's information

<sup>28</sup> Telegram 35, March 15, 1946, 10 p. m., from Saigon, reported that the Sino-French military agreement was signed at Chungking on March 14, thereby implementing the earlier agreement for relief of Chinese by French forces (751-93/3-15461).

From China shows growing Chinese sentiment against Vietminh-French agreement probably based on Chinese [fear of?] Communist state south of China and also [fear?] to failure Chinese sponsored party to have bigger role in Vietminh. Increasing number incidents Saigon and elsewhere but on whole Annamites willing to work out agreement as planned and general belief if Chinese had not changed attitude things would have gone well.

REED

*The Consul at Saigon (Reed) to the Secretary of State*

Saigon, April 1, 1946—10 a. m.

[Received April 2—10:30 p. m.]

70. Assassination Dr. Phat, member Cochin China Council, on March 29 by known Vietminh extremists and threats to kill members opposed to Cochin China joining Vietnam has not helped Vietnam cause. Increasing extremist activities Saigon and Cochin China also bad effect and moderate Cochin Chinese not particularly pro-French comment Vietminh trying to force joining Vietnam whether Cochin Chinese desires or not. On other hand French seizure of Treasury Hanoi precipitating general strike and incidents in Tonkin have not helped French cause and inspires little confidence that they will keep faith. One might hope that both sides take no steps during period of negotiation which might jeopardize final peaceable outcome but every likelihood stormy period ahead, particularly so far as concerns mature status Cochin China.

REED:

8516.00 4-546

*The Secretary of State to the French Ambassador (Bonnet)*<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> This note was reported by the Department in telegram 1635, April 12, 1946, 5 p. m., to Paris and repeated to Chungking and Saigon.

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to His Excellency the French Ambassador and has the honor to refer to the Ambassador's note no. 167 of March 7, 1946,<sup>30</sup> enclosing a copy of the Franco-

<sup>30</sup> Not printed.

Chinese Agreement with regard to the relief of Chinese forces in northern Indo-China by French forces and requesting the approval of the Combined Chiefs of Staff thereto.

The Secretary of State is pleased to inform the Ambassador that the Combined Chiefs of Staff have no objection to the relief of Chinese troops in northern French Indo-China by French forces, since they consider that such arrangements are a matter for determination by the Governments of France and China.

Since the Franco-Chinese agreement completes the reversion of all Indo-China to French control, the Combined Chiefs of Staff consider that the French military commander in Indo-China should act as a medium for the French Government for coordination with the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers on matters relating to the repatriation of Japanese from Indo-China, and that the Chinese Supreme Commander<sup>31</sup> and Admiral Mountbatten should be relieved of

<sup>31</sup> Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

their duties and responsibilities for disarmament and evacuation of Japanese in Indo-China.

Current repatriation schedules envisage the completion of the evacuation of the Japanese from northern Indo-China by April 15. The Combined Chiefs of Staff consider that it is most desirable to have the French commander in Indo-China conform to present schedules.

Accordingly, Admiral Mountbatten has been directed to make the necessary arrangements with the French military commander in Indo-China regarding the transfer of his share of the above-mentioned responsibility at the earliest possible date.

The Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers and the appropriate Chinese authorities have been informed of the Combined Chiefs of Staff action on this matter.

It is understood that a memorandum has been addressed directly to the French Military Attaché to the United States informing him of the above and requesting that appropriate instructions be issued to the French military commander in Indo-China.

WASHINGTON, April 10, 1946.

5516,00/4-1946: Telegram

*The Vice Consul at Hanoi (O'Sullivan) to the Secretary of State*<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> This telegram was summarized in a Department circular telegram of April 19, 1946, noon, to Bangkok, Batavia, Chungking, Manila, and Paris.

HANOI, April 18, 1946--8 a. m.

PRIORITY

[Received April 18--8 a. m.]

2. Despite many questions which are still in fluid state, conditions in Hanoi are surprisingly quiet. French Annamite and Chinese troops are in city in varying force but with comparatively little friction.

French troops under General Valluy, composed of elements of Second Armored and Ninth Colonial Infantry Divisions, are making strenuous efforts to avoid antagonizing Chinese.

Fifty-third Army with scattered services are only Chinese troops which remain in vicinity of Hanoi. Date of their withdrawal is unknown here.

Repatriation of Japanese soldiers and civilians north of 16th parallel has been taking place during past 2 weeks. Approximately 30 of 35,000 have been shipped. Remainder are scheduled to leave in near future.

French appear to be exercising no civilian functions here. Vietnam is *de facto* government of Hanoi, running police and administrative services. There are indications that no effective central authority exists outside of city areas although natives are said to be bitterly anti-French. Passage of recent French convoy from Haiphong to Hanoi, for example, was resisted by barricades (but apparently not by rifle fire) in villages along route.

Negotiations now opening between French and Vietnam at Dalat (Dalat is hill station in Cochin China) to implement preliminary agreement to March 6th. Most important immediate question appears to be status of Cochin China.

Food situation generally better than last year. Reports indicate there should be no famine in northern FIC in near future.

O'SULLIVAN



*The Secretary of State to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Officers*<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> At Bangkok, Batavia, Chungking, London, Manila, Paris, and The Hague.  
SECRET WASHINGTON, April 18, 1946—1 p. m.

Vietnam Republic's President Ho Chi Minh requested U.S. UK and other recognitions approximating French recognition as free state within French Union. UK informally replied unable recognize because negotiations re Vietnam actual status continuing.

BYRNES

8516 66 4-2746: Telegram

*The Consul at Saigon (Reed) to the Secretary of State*

SAIGON, April 27, 1946—11 a. m.  
[Received April 29—2: 15 a. m.]

122. Mytel 121, April 27, 10 a. m.<sup>33</sup> Returned yesterday from Hanoi

<sup>33</sup> Not printed: for summary, see circular telegram of April 20, 11 a. m., *infra*, where situation tense. Called on all high French, Chinese, Vietnam officials. He [Ho?] dwelt largely on Cochin China issue, first, must join Vietnam, second, French must cease entering Cochin China; he also mentioned need for complete financial independence, own bank and own bank note issue. He was highly indignant action of French in arresting and expelling [expelling] from Dalat Dr. Thach, Cochin Chinese delegate to Dalat conference. He expressed hope for future if French lived up to their agreements which he rather doubted but added that outside help, chiefly capital and technical aid, must be supplied.

Pessimistic views held by all French regarding success of Dalat conference which is now suspended for a few days while Vietnam demands regarding Cochin (cease hostilities, release political internees Armistice Commission and political freedom) and French counter-offer regarding all Indochina (establish special committee to investigate Vietnam-French incidents) are being studied and that French have now adopted thesis conference merely preliminary and Paris approval must be obtained which is contrary previous understanding. French defend arrest, expelling Dr. Thach on grounds that he is notorious anti-French Cochin Chinese and that Cochin China not yet part of Vietnam.

French insistence withdrawal Chinese from north and all-over procrastination to Dalat may have ulterior motives as it is not impossible French military coup may be brought off as soon as Chinese gone. Some French civilians have spoken of this "as putting Vietnamese in their place". In any event over-all picture is not happy one and much compromise, good faith and tolerance needed to effect peaceful settlement.

REED

*The Acting Secretary of State to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Officers*<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> At Bangkok, Batavia, London, Nanking, Paris, Singapore, and The Hague.  
WASHINGTON, May 1, 1946—7 p. m.

French Vietnam conference Dalat temporarily suspended for study conflicting views re Cochinchina. Vietnam officials hope for future clouded by doubts French will abide by their agreements. French pessimistic re outcome. Vietnam demands cessation hostilities Cochinchina, release political internees, establishment armistice commission and political freedom Cochinchina. French counter-offer special committee study French-Vietnam incidents throughout Indochina. French now hold Dalat conference merely preliminary and results must have Paris approval.

Consul Saigon observes<sup>40</sup> French maneuvers propaganda to force

<sup>40</sup> Telegram 130, April 20, 1946, 3 p. m., not printed. In it, Consul Reed mentioned that Ho Chi Minh had stressed to him at Hanoi "utmost necessity of interesting American capital and employing American technicians in Vietnam." (851G.00/4-3046)

withdrawal Chinese troops Tonkin and delaying tactics Dalat conference compatible with possibility French planning military coup when Chinese withdraw.

ACHESON

*The Acting Secretary of State to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Officers*<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> At Nanking and Saigon.

WASHINGTON, May 13, 1946—1 p. m.

French Foreign official confident ultimate success negotiations with Vietnam which may be prolonged.<sup>43</sup> Vietnam deleg France impressed

<sup>43</sup> Telegram 2243, May 9, 1946, 2 p. m., from Paris, not printed. him favorably but he remarked recent developments Indochina China disturbing since believed Chinese commanders Indochina openly defying undermining Chiang Kai-shek's sincere efforts evacuate Indochina. Chinese official Paris stated<sup>44</sup> that Vietnam deleg composed five Com-

<sup>44</sup> Telegram 2279, May 10, 1946, 4 p. m., from Paris, not printed. munist, four non-Communists, one Kuomintang, but Communists Vietnam better organized than non-Communists and supported by French Communists, that Chinese troops would evacuate, that Chinese Govt would be neutral, would not be intermediary for Annamese seeking US support. Consul Hanoi observes<sup>45</sup> Chinese appear try-

<sup>45</sup> Telegram 10, May 6, 1946, 8 a. m., not printed. ing undermining Viet Minh party and leadership hoping leave Chinese-dominated Dong Minh Hoi party in power.

ACHESON

*The Acting Secretary of State to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Officers*<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup>At Bangkok, London, Moscow, Nanking, Moscow, Paris, and Saigon.

WASHINGTON, May 14, 1946—11 a. m.

Vietnam Republic's President believes satisfactory agreement can be reached with French, expressed confidence their good faith in Hanoi Paris but disturbed by French actions Saigon.

ACHESON

8516.60/5-946: Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to General of the Army George C. Marshall, at Nanking*

WASHINGTON, May 15, 1946—6 p. m.

133. For General Marshall. Dept concerned by reports received from both French and US sources indicating serious effects of continued presence 53rd Chinese Army and independent units northern Indochina despite agreement to withdraw all troops by Mar 31 or Apr 15 at latest.

Consul Hanoi (Reinfotel May 14) reports danger that actions local Chinese military Tonkin will embitter Franco-Chinese relations (See Paris Embtel 6 to Chungking May 9<sup>47</sup>) as well as obstruct recent

<sup>47</sup>Telegram 22431 to Department, May 9, 1946, 2 p. m., from Paris, not printed, but see circular telegram of May 13, 1 p. m., p. —.

progress Franco-Viet Nam relations. Also that Viet Nam President hinted his tasks easier when Chinese leave. Hanoi believes that few problems facing French and Annamese can be handled until Chinese evacuated.

French Emb Wash May 9 verbally emphasized importance French Govt attaches to prompt Chinese evacuation to avoid further incidents, and referred possibility evacuation 53rd Army by ship.

Dept believes everything possible should be done urgently speed evacuation Chinese troops. Request your views as to what action, if any, might be taken US Govt to assist in solution this problem, and your recommendations thereon.

ACHESON



*The Secretary of State to Certain Diplomatic Officers*<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup>At Nanking and The Hague. This telegram was based on telegrams 160, May 14, 1946, 3 p. m., and 163, May 15, from Saigon, neither printed.

WASHINGTON, May 20, 1946—8 a. m.

D'Argenlien to meet President Vietnam soon prior departure French. Vietnam delegs Paris for final negotiations re governmental structure Indochina and Vietnam's status therein. French propose federal organization under High Commissioner who exercise French Union's powers and with Assembly initiate federal legislation. Assembly composed 10 French members, 10 members each from Tonkin, Annam, Cochinchina, Laos, Cambodia. Each state form own govt, elect Parliament, vote own constitution, recruit defense army, fix budget, organize administration, enact internal laws. Vietnam counter-proposal would limit federal powers to customs policy currency and supplies coordination, would place relations between Vietnam and federation on status international relations with High Commissioner as ambassador to federation's member states.

BYRNES

125.785/5-2046: Telegram

*The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in France (Caffery)*

RESTRICTED

WASHINGTON, May 20, 1946—5 p. m.

2427. Consulate Saigon raised to Consulate General effective immediately. Inform French Government.

BYRNES

851G.00.5-2046: Telegram

*The Vice Consul at Hanoi (O'Sullivan) to the Secretary of State*

HANOI, May 20, 1946—6 p. m.

[Received May 23—11:30 p. m.]

20. Please pass to General Marshall for information.

There are three important political parties in Viet Nam.

They are Viet Minh League, composed of former Indo-Chinese Communist Party (PCI dissolved itself November 30, 1945) and Democratic Party, son [sic] Vietnam Cach Minh Dong Minh Hoi, generally referred to as Dong Minh Hoi or DMH; and Vietnam Quoc Dan Dang.

There are in addition several splinter parties which seem to serve chiefly as vehicles for organized banditry.

Both Dong Minh Hoi and Quoc Dan Dang seem have support of Chinese. Most active part of Viet Minh is factor composed of former PCI members.

Viet Minh strength seems to be spread throughout northern Indo-China. Dong Minh Hoi and Quoc Dan Dang control territory in Moncay, Langson, Vinh Yen area.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Vice Consul O'Sullivan, in telegram 69, July 26, 1946, 4 p. m., from Hanoi, reported the steady elimination of all organized opposition to the Viet Minh League. The Dong Minh Hoi and Quoc Dan Dang had lost influence with the departure of the 52nd Chinese Army from Tonkin. (8516.00/7-2646)

As yet no Catholic party has appeared nor do Catholics appear to be committed to support of any one party. Viet Minh League has been making tentative moves to capture Catholic support but is said to be too radical to obtain full cooperation from church. In view of fact church claims million members in Tonking and Annam (large percentage believed to be "rice Christians"), it seems probable that Catholics as group will [not?] remain long absent from politics.

Sent Department, repeated Nanking; Saigon informed airmail.

O'SULLIVAN

have been ordered to evacuate by land and to reach Chinese territory before 10 June or, weather permitting, before the end of May. Remaining division is now at Haiphong awaiting transportation to Japan. At request of Foreign Office SCAP has been informed of foregoing.

SMYTH

851G.00/6-546: Telegram

*The Vice Consul at Hanoi (O'Sullivan) to the Secretary of State*

HANOI, June 5, 1946—5 p. m.

[Received June 6—7:52 a. m.]

36. Ho Chi Minh probably will call at AmEmbassy shortly. He has constantly given me impression he would pay great attention to any suggestions made by Dept.

O'SULLIVAN

851G.00/6-546: Telegram

*The Vice Consul at Hanoi (O'Sullivan) to the Secretary of State*

HANOI, June 5, 1946—8 p. m.

[Received June 6—10:45 a. m.]

37. There is growing conviction in Viet Nam circles that principal point involved in Paris negotiations will be future status of Cochin China and how it will be determined.

Viet Namese generally agree that without Cochin China any independence will be largely theoretical.

Viet Nam position regarding referendum appears to have undergone extensive changes. Ho Chi Minh when he signed convention of March 6th was convinced that in any "fair" referendum Cochin China would not [vote?] to attach itself to Viet Nam.

However, Dalat Conference delegation apparently returned to Hanoi with realization that Viet Nam strength in Cochin China was diminishing. This they attribute to French propaganda and absence of freedom for their own agents.

Realization of diminishing Viet Nam strength in Cochin China is probably principal reason why Ho accompanied delegation to Paris. He hopes to reach satisfactory solution on this all-important question on basis of numerous friendships which he has with Left Wing French circles.



French here give impression they would not object to referendum in Cochin China. However, they indicate they would not care to allow complete freedom for Viet Nam agents there. Their objection is that such agents would resort to terrorism to influence vote. (There seems to be certain amount of justification for French contention. Viet Nam police have been treating pro-French Viet Namese and Metis with French nationality rather severely in Tonkin.)

Outcome of any referendum would probably be largely determined by conditions under which it would be held. French feel Cochin China would vote 50% for autonomy. Viet Nam claim Cochin China would vote 80% for incorporation with Viet Nam. Both claim[s] have an unspoken promise [*promise?*] that claimant could establish conditions of referendum. Neutral observers here feel vote in referendum free of undue influence from either side would be close.

Sent Dept as 37, June 5, 8 p. m.; repeated Nanking, Saigon informed airmail.

O'SULLIVAN:

*The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

Paris, July 7, 1946—1 p. m.

[Received July 7—12:39 p. m.]

3323. Opening of Franco-Viet Nam conference at Fontainebleau yesterday brought to an apparent end pre-conference honeymoon period during which French and Indochinese officials had rivaled with each other in displays of Franco-Viet Nam friendship.

After long wait for Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu supposed to preside over conference, unexpected announcement that "Admiral was indisposed" created uneasiness and rumors to effect Viet Nam delegates had vetoed presidency of Thierry d'Argenlieu who, in their eyes, "typified French imperialism".

Max André, head of French delegation, assuming Presidency at last moment, delivered innocuous speech of welcome and declared conference open. Mr. Phan Van Dong, head of Viet Nam delegation, immediately protested against this unilateral assumption of the chair of the direction of the proceedings. In a fighting speech which contrasted sharply with platitudes of André's address, he went immediately to the core of the worst difficulties which the conference will have to face. In sharp words, he protested against "the mutilation of the Viet Nam Motherland" through the creation of an independent state of Cochinchina outside of the Viet Nam. He went on to accuse the French authorities in Indochina of having violated the accords of Dalat of March 6, 1946 and of having used these accords to penetrate peacefully in the north while military operations were being carried on in the south and in the interior.

This unexpected offensive of the Viet Nam delegation on the first day has created a sensation. Independent and impartial *Combat*, genuinely interested in colonial problems, headlines Viet Nam accusation across the entire first page and recognizes French mistakes made in Indochina. Communist *Humanite* frankly sides with Viet Nam. Socialists *Populaire* gives fair and impartial account in a vein sympathetic to Viet Nam. MRP. *Aube* regrets "that French goodwill did not find a corresponding echo". In the conservative and Nationalist papers there is literally an explosion of wrath against Viet Nam delegation. Increasingly Leftist but always ultra-Nationalist *Ordre* terms Phan Van Dong's statements "shocking" and already blames Viet Nam for any future breakdown in negotiations. All these papers play up violations of Dalat agreement by the Viet Nam and underline assassinations, kidnapping and rape of Europeans as justification of continued military operations by French expeditionary corps.

On the whole conference had gotten off to bad start. Viet Nam leaders also express their regret that conference "of such considerable importance" should be held outside of Paris.

Interesting to note that yesterday afternoon conversation held between Ho Chi Minh, Viet Nam President, and Algerian deputies of friends of manifest group headed by Ferhat Abbas (my despatch 5571 of July 3<sup>24</sup>) on similarity between problems facing Algeria and

<sup>24</sup> Not printed: it reported an interview with the Algerian autonomist leader, Ferhat-Abbas. A delegation of eleven Algerian deputies, comprising the pro-independence group, "democratic union in favor of the Algerian Manifest", was in Paris. (851R.00/7-346)

Viet Nam.

Sent Dept as 3323, repeated London as 509.

*The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

PARIS, August 2, 1946—6 p. m.

[Received 8:16 p. m.]

3801. Viet Nam delegation at Fontainebleau conference yesterday broke off negotiations on ground that French have violated March 6 accord by convoking new conference at Dalat. Head of delegation alleged that French intend to use new Dalat conference (to which Viet Nam was not invited) to engineer their own statute for Indo-Chinese federation and to fix future of Cochin China and other areas claimed by Viet Nam. He added that Fontainebleau conference is not terminated but only suspended until French clear up this "equivocal" situation. Delegation will remain at Fontainebleau for time being and is prepared to maintain contact with French delegates on unofficial basis.

This decision has been received by press as a kind of bomb shell although reports had been current that conference was entering a critical stage and that he [Ho], Chi Minh, would depart soon for Indo-China. Press reaction has followed expected lines with left-wing organs justifying decision while right-wing and radical papers accuse Viet Nam of blackmail and insist that France has perfect right to consult other peoples of Indochina in parallel Dalat conference.

Radical *Aurore* demands that France shall not "abdicate" in Indo-China and adopts *Epoque* line in charging that "other imperialisms" are utilizing Viet Nam for own purposes.

*Monde* insists that France is playing role of impartial arbiter and must not retreat before ultimatum. *Monde* also takes off gloves with respect to Ho Chi Minh, recalling that he was friend of Doriot and that in 1945 he publicly expressed determination to "break off all relations with French people".

Among defenders of Viet Nam Communist *Humanité* is most outspoken. Independent's *Combat* continues to stress "the flagrant dissonance" between French statements in Paris and French policy in Indochina which has recently amounted to a "provocation". *Combat* expects serious repercussions in Indochina.

Caught in the middle, both Socialists and MRP are embarrassed and worried. *Populaire* blames Admiral d'Argenlieu for unjustifiable policy which must be repudiated by French Government. *L'Anbe*, on other hand, takes aggrieved [stand?] and insists Dalat conference is entirely proper under March 6 accord.

Bandet, one of Foreign Office delegates at Fontainebleau, admits situation is serious but believes conference will resume in a week or 10 days. He insists new Dalat conference is only exploratory and consultative. Bandet once again indicated French officials are not particularly anxious to speed up work of Fontainebleau conference and are quite willing for relations with Viet Nam to continue under present agreement until the pacification of Indochina and particularly Cochin China is completed. He added that security situation in Cochin China is more serious than French public is aware.

Sent Dept as 3801; Dept please repeat to Saigon; repeated London as 578.

CAFFERY



*Memorandum by the Chief of the Division of Southeast Asian Affairs  
(Moffet) to the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs  
(Vincent)*

[WASHINGTON.] August 9, 1946.

Recent developments indicate that the French are moving to regain a large measure of their control of Indochina in violation of the spirit of the March 6 convention. The evidence, as set forth below, suggests that the French are attempting to gain their objective by manoeuvres designed to confine and weaken Viet Nam. In the event that Viet Nam decides to resist these encroachments, which is by no means unlikely, widespread hostilities may result.

The chief opposition to the reestablishment of French rule in Indochina has all along come from the Annamese, who inhabit the three east coastal provinces of Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina, which once comprised the Kingdom of Annam. The populations of the other two countries of Indochina—Cambodia and Laos—are not in a high state of political development or in any condition seriously to resist French control. A *modus vivendi* between the French and the Annamese was achieved in the preliminary convention of March 6, 1946, by which the Annamese "Republic of Viet Nam" was recognized as a free state within the Indochinese Federation and the Viet Nam Government declared its readiness to receive the French Army. The convention left for future settlement two crucial problems: the status of Viet Nam in its external relations, and the geographical extent of Viet Nam. On the former point, the provisional agreement stated that "each contracting party will take all necessary measures . . .<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Omission indicated in the original.

to create the favorable atmosphere necessary for an immediate opening of amicable and free negotiations. These negotiations will bear particularly upon diplomatic relations between the Viet Nam and foreign states, the future status of Indochina, French economic and cultural interests in Viet Nam." On the latter point the agreement stated that "with respect to the bringing together of the three (provinces), the French Government pledges itself to ratify the decisions taken by the populations consulted by referendum." The crux of the present situation lies in the apparent intention of the French to settle both matters to their own advantage and without reference to Viet Nam.

The hostility of the Annamese toward the French began to mount to its present intensity when the French on June 1 announced the inauguration of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Cochinchina. Annamese leaders had long emphasized their view that the inclusion of Cochinchina in Viet Nam was a matter of life and death to their country. Cochinchina, it may be mentioned, contains the important mercantile cities of Saigon and Cholon, includes the mouths of the Mekong, and is the richest province in Indochina. Called the Southern Province by the Viet Nameese, it is racially indistinct from Tonkin and Annam. Statements by the French that the referendum in Cochinchina (as pledged in the March 6 convention) would still be held failed to reassure Viet Nam leaders, who pointed out that such a referendum could not possibly be fair owing to the suppression by the French of pro-Viet Nam political parties and of all anti-French opinion. SEAN's information tends to substantiate this point of view.

Tension between the French and the Annamese reached its present pitch when the French on August 1 convened a conference at Dalat (in southern Annam) to which the Royal Governments of Cambodia and Laos, the Government of the autonomous Republic of Cochinchina, and the native peoples of southern Annam and high plateau of Indochina (but *not* Viet Nam, recognized by the French as part of the Indochina Federation and French Union) to send delegates to "study the framework of the French Union". Subsequently published agenda of the conference indicated that the salient aspects of the Indochina Federation would also be deliberated. As an immediate result of this conference, the Viet Nam delegation which had been discussing the future relation between France and Viet Nam with the representatives of the French at Fontainebleau since July 6 announced that they were suspending negotiations until the French should have cleared up the "equivocal" situation which had been created. The head of the Viet Nam delegation, who had opened the conference with a violent blast against French policies, charged that the French were now trying to engineer their own statute for the Indochinese Federation and their own settlement of the status of Cochinchina and other areas claimed by Viet Nam. The view of Consul Saigon is not very different. He gave as his opinion that a front against Viet Nam was in the making, that the states participating in the Dalat Conference were at least tacitly recognized as free states by the French, and that France and these free states are now determining the status of the Indochinese federation without reference to Viet Nam. In his view it indicated double-dealing on the part of the French, and he reported that the French Commissioner for Cochinchina had forced the issue by threatening to resign unless his policy is carried out. Nothing has been said at the conference about a referendum. Finally, Consul Saigon added that he had learned that representatives of the southern regions of the Province of Annam (which has always been claimed by Viet Nam) will petition for inclusion of their territories in Cochinchina. In view of the completeness of the agenda of the Dalat Conference, which covers the essential framework of the Indochinese federation, and in view of the deliberate exclusion of Viet Nam from the conference, the conclusion is inescapable that the French are endeavoring to whittle down Viet Nam and to settle the future form of organization of Indochina with those who may be expected to be amenable to French influence.

Annamese reaction to French moves has been sharp, and following the suspension of the Fontainebleau negotiations, there were pro-Viet Nam manifestations in Saigon. The ambush of a French supply column near Hanoi by Annamese soldiers, during which the French suffered 52 casualties (one of the worst of many incidents during the past several months), may have been related to the opening of the Dalat Conference.

While it is to be doubted that the French will allow the Fontainebleau Conference to break down completely, Embassy Paris quotes Baudet as having stated that French officials are in no hurry to speed up negotiations until the pacification of Indochina, and particularly of Cochinchina, has been completed. In this connection, Consul Saigon reports that more troops are arriving in Indochina and that the French military position has grown much stronger. Meanwhile, the Saigon press has been carrying vitriolic attacks against Viet Nam. Since this press is completely controlled by the French, there would appear to be no official objection to this line.

In his latest report, Consul Hanoi states that there now exists an imminent danger of an open break between the French and Viet Nam. He adds that a rupture of relations would probably be followed by a period of anarchy and that, although the French could quickly overrun the country, they could not—as they themselves admit—pacify it except through a long and bitter military operation.

In conclusion, it is SEA's view that the Annamese are faced with the choice of a costly submission to the French or of open resistance, and that the French may be preparing to resort to force in order to secure their position throughout Indochina. It may not be advisable for this Government to take official notice of this situation during the Peace Conference,<sup>26</sup> but the Department should be prepared, SEA

<sup>26</sup> For documentation on the conference, held between July 29 and October 15, see vol. —, pp. — ff.

believes, to express to the French, in view of our interest in peace and orderly development of dependent peoples, our hope that they will abide by the spirit of the March 6 convention.

A[BBOT] L[OW] M[OFFAT]



*The Consul at Saigon (Reed) to the Secretary of State*

Saigon, August 17, 1946—10 a. m.

[Received August 18—2:53 a. m.]

342. At Dalat conference, which closed on 14th, delegations were reasonably unanimous as to desired structure and scope of federation and relationship of member states with federation and each other. Cochinese delegations vowed [*delegation showed*] more independence of thought than other delegations and followed less slavishly French pattern for Indochina of future. This is part to impress Cochinese and to help lessen belief present Cochinese Govt only a puppet, but as previously reported members of this govt sincerely want more freedom of action and less domination by French. While findings and recommendations of conference not binding they appear to be reasonable basis for future, but it is certain Viet Nam will find much fault therewith, as they fall short of the larger degree of independence desired by that state. Growing belief High Commissioner and Commissioner for Cochinese-China<sup>55</sup> may go as their policy subjected increasing criticism here and reportedly in France, particularly in calling Dalat conference knowing Viet Nam could object and in creating Cochinese-China Govt without reference to referendum. However, they argue no reason why French Viet Nam negotiations should decide future without reference to other states and that necessary atmosphere for referendum is lacking (latter probably true as any referendum under existing conditions might well increase partisan activities). Unquestionably both officials are less liberal in views re native peoples than when first came to French Indochina. Next move will be submission Dalat proposals to French Govt and attempt to reconcile proposals with Fontainebleau agenda. However, regardless soundness many these proposals, difficult foresee any great degree success in above so long as Cochinese China stays apart from Viet Nam, which is one point of French policy in French Indochina.

REED

REED

8516.00/S-2946: Telegram

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Consul at Saigon (Reed)*

WASHINGTON, September 4, 1946—5 p. m.

240. Action irtel 354 Aug 26 commended.<sup>55</sup> Lose no opportunity<sup>55</sup> Not printed.

counteract with persons responsible press orientation, and in manner you deem most effective, French colonial tendency picture US as aggressive and imperialistic. This brings certain French colonials, unwittingly for most part, very close to Communist Party line.

With his knowledge US Clarac (irtel 357 Aug 29) should know better than encourage anti-American suspicions this juncture Franco-American relations, and Dept believes he can be persuaded take and foster attitude required by logic events.

CLAYTON

*The Acting Secretary of State to the Consul at Saigon (Reed)*

WASHINGTON, September 9, 1946—2 p. m.

241. Intelligence reports of uncertain reliability state USSR (a) anxious see Ho Chi Minh succeed unite three Kys under Viet Nam for possible eventual weapon against National Govt China and (b) has instructed French Communists manoeuvre reliable French Officers to Indochina for gaining cadres future Viet Nam army. Keep Dept informed indications subservience to Party line by Ho and other leaders, relative strength Communist and non-Communist elements Viet Nam, and contacts with Communists other countries. Inform O'Sullivan. Sent Saigon. Repeated Paris<sup>20</sup> for info.

<sup>20</sup> As telegram 4680.

CLAYTON

8516.00, 9-1146

*The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*

PARIS, September 11, 1946.

[Received September 17.]

No. 6131

Sir: I have the honor to report that at his request I received a visit this morning from M. Ho Chi Minh, "President of the Republic of Viet-Nam", who confirmed the news published in the local press that the Fontainebleau negotiations between the Viet-Nam representatives and the French representatives have practically broken down and the Viet-Nam delegation will be returning to Indochina within the next few days.

The principal point on which they failed to reach agreement concerns Cochinchina: the French representatives insist that Cochinchina be an "independent" entity in an Indochinese federation, while the Viet-Nam representatives insist that one central government in Indochina must dominate the whole country. He said that he and his party aspired to Viet-Nam "independence" in an "Union Francaise". He said that they would like to receive some "help" from us, but did not specify what he meant by that. He took occasion to say that he was not a communist.

From the general fuzziness of his remarks, I gathered that he would like us to get into the game and he would be very pleased if he could use us in some way or other in his future negotiations with the French authorities.

I expressed our interest in Indochina and the people of Indochina but made no commitments.

Respectfully yours,

JEFFERSON CAFFERY

*The Consul at Saigon (Reed) to the Secretary of State*

Saigon, September 17, 1946—11 a. m.

[Received September 18—1:03 a. m.]

374. Both Clarac and Chief of Sûreté have informed me increase[d] Communist activities in French Indochina are disquieting. Intercepted letters indicate Chinese Communists are entrenched in Chinese centers Saigon and Haiphong and that Annamites chiefly in Tonkin and Annam, but also to certain extent in Cochinchina, are receiving much Communist propaganda. They feel Viet Nam leaders not entirely responsible for this apparent trend but point out those leaders have Communist training and leanings. Clarac added that one difficulty in handling Communist problem is impossibility using word "Communist" in regard to this movement as strength of Communist party in France precludes any unfavorable mention. Both believed continuance uncertainty French-Viet Nam relations despite signing provisional agreement<sup>1</sup> will contribute to such activities but stressed

<sup>1</sup> See telegram 4671, *infra*.

Communists are already in French Indochina (no Russians) and close watch over developments must be maintained as agencies outside French Indochina are undoubtedly supplying propaganda.

This telegram 374 to Department, repeated as 2 Nanking. Department please repeat Paris.

REED.

531 G.O.P. 3-1746: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Coffery) to the Secretary of State*

PARIS, September 17, 1946—5 p. m.

[Received September 17—3:24 p. m.]

4671. At final conference with French September 14, Ho Chi Minh signed joint declaration and *modus vivendi* and departed few hours later for Tonkin to sail for Saigon. Agreement will be submitted to French Cabinet tomorrow<sup>1</sup> and after expected approval, given to

<sup>1</sup> The French Council of Ministers approved the agreement on September 18; the text was transmitted to Department in despatch 6202, September 20, 1946, from Paris; neither printed.

press on September 19. Following are essential points of agreement summarized from text obtained from Foreign Office.

Joint declaration emphasizes agreement of March 6, 1946, still in effect but *modus vivendi* providing provisional solutions of urgent problems was necessary until permanent and definitive agreement could be reached. Date and procedure for referendum in Cochinchina is to be fixed later. It is expected Fontainebleau conference will be resumed in January 1947.

Summaries of numbered paragraphs of *modus vivendi* follow:

1. Reciprocal "democratic" rights for citizens of one country in territory of other.
2. Recognition of reciprocal property rights. French property requisitioned or seized in Viet Nam to be restored.
3. French schools to operate freely in Viet Nam; Pasteur institute to be restored to French.
4. Viet Nam to give France priority when seeking advisors, technicians or experts.
5. Piste tied to French franc to be single currency for Indochina with Banque de l'Indochine as temporary bank of issue.



6. Establishes customs union and free trade within Indochinese federation.

7. Provides for coordination of transport and communications of all types within federation and *Union Française*.

8. Pending agreement on Viet Nam diplomatic relations. Mixed Commission will arrange consular representation with neighboring states.

9. Re Cochinchina: (a) all fighting to cease; (b) Mixed Commission of general staffs to control this; (c) all political and military prisoners to be released except those accused of common crimes; (d) democratic liberties reciprocally guaranteed; (e) unfriendly propaganda mutually to cease; (f) collaboration in control of ex-enemy citizens; (g) representative of Viet Nam accredited to High Commissioner will control execution of above provisions.

Signed by Ho Chi Minh and Marius Moutet.

It will be seen that Ho Chi Minh obtained satisfaction on majority of points reported in mytel 4591, September 12.

Boissézon of Foreign Office states French generally satisfied with agreement but would [have] liked to include paragraphs defining more precisely relations of Viet Nam to Indochinese federation and French Union. They were also unsuccessful in having written into agreement provisions for disarmament of resistance elements in Cochinchina but Boissézon claims it was orally understood with Ho Chi Minh that such elements would have chance of either retiring to Tonkin with arms and baggage or giving up arms if remaining in Cochinchina.

Sent Dept as 4671, repeated London as 690, Dept please relay to Saigon as 2.

CAFFERY

*The Consul at Saigon (Reed) to the Secretary of State*

SAIGON, October 19, 1946—6 p. m.  
[Received October 22—2:05 p. m.]

411. Meeting High Commissioner and Ho took place yesterday as reported Mytel 409, Oct 18.<sup>82</sup> Few details known but understand

<sup>82</sup>Not printed. In despatch 6, October 22, 1946, from Hanoi, Vice Consul O'Sullivan reported the return there on October 21 of Ho Chi Minh from France by way of Camranh Bay, where he had conferred with Admiral d'Arceuilien on October 18, and added: "Generous gestures on the part of both the French and Vietnamese created an unparalleled atmosphere of public unity and cordiality between the two groups." (SS1G.001/10-2246)

meeting most amicable with Ho unusually pro-French and even denouncing Vietnam terrorist activities. So much so one recalls earlier rumors Ho has sold out to French. If above true, question poses itself whether Ho can keep unqualified support in north, particularly in view of further reports of Communist character of that state. I still believe French Communists desire soft pedal Communist trends Vietnam for political reasons and will adopt passive attitude until after elections. FIC vote against constitution (mytel 404<sup>83</sup>) is be-

<sup>83</sup>Not printed: it reported that preliminary figures showed an overwhelming majority "voted no" (SS33 to 1701) (SS1G.001/10-1746).

lieved to be vote against left and is possible Fascist reaction against theory independence for native peoples.

REED

*The Vice Consul at Hanoi (O'Sullivan) to the Secretary of State*

HANOI, October 25, 1946—11 a. m.  
[Received 9:20 p. m.]

96. In private conversation, Ho Chi Minh told me that effectiveness of *modus vivendi* would depend upon French actions in Cochin-China.

"If they allow spread of democratic liberties, release political prisoners, and stop attacking my people, things will go well for them in Tonkin. Otherwise the commissions (provided for in *modus vivendi*) will not accomplish much", he said.

He added fighting in south would not stop unless French applied agreement locally.

He stated Vietnamese policy remained unchanged: i.e., Nambo<sup>84</sup>

<sup>84</sup>Southern district, meaning Cochin-China.

must be united to Vietnam. He thought that French had reached conclusion that referendum in Cochin-China would favor unification and they therefore seemed to be seeking to avoid it.

He said he had been promised no economic aid but thought French would provide what they could if and when definite agreement was reached.

In concluding Ho said that if there was any information I required he would see that I obtained it.

O'SULLIVAN

*The Vice Consul at Hanoi (O'Sullivan) to the Secretary of State*

HANOI, November 1, 1946—8 a.  
[Received November 2—12:30 p.]

101. ReDepel 241, September 9, 2 p. m., to Saigon. There apparently is contact between Vietnam and Chinese Communists.

Reports difficult to verify indicate presence in Vietnam of Chinese Communists who are said to be used as advisors in provinces. Numbers are not known but estimates run to hundreds. Traffic apparently is directed by sea from Shanghai to Hong Kong, thence to Haiphong.

However, any reports concerning presence of Chinese Communists in Haiphong itself should be regarded with suspicion. Pirates from South China have combined with Chinese Army deserters to black-mail Chinese congregating there. While calling themselves Communists, they are actually outlaws.

O'SULLIVAN

S51G.00/11-2946: Telegram

*The Ambassador in France (Caffery) to the Secretary of State*<sup>65</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Repeated by the Department to Hanoi as No. 15 and to Saigon as No. 299.

Paris, November 29, 1946—3 p. m.

[Received November 29—12:53 p. m.]

5857. The French are very concerned over developments in Indochina. A high Foreign Ministry official said they are particularly worried because they have "positive proof that Ho Chi Minh is in direct contact with Moscow and is receiving advice and instructions from the Soviets."<sup>66</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Consul Reed, in telegram 463, December 2, 1946, 3 p. m., from Saigon, in response reported "Majority my contacts confirm generally development of Communist setup in FIC, chiefly in Tonkin, North Annam", as previously telegraphed (S51G.00/12-246). Hanoi had sent a number of telegrams and despatches in regard to fighting at Haiphong between French and Vietnamese forces since November 23, following various incidents earlier and a French ultimatum to Vietnam to evacuate certain areas.

Repeated London as 780, Moscow as 416.

CAFFERY



*The Vice Consul at Hanoi (O'Sullivan) to the Secretary of State*<sup>65</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Repeated by the Department to Paris in telegram 6332, December 5, 1946, 7 p. m.

HANOI, December 3, 1946—noon.

[Received December 4—4 a. m.]

131. ReDeptel 15, November 29.<sup>66</sup> Possibility Ho Chi Minh in

<sup>66</sup> See footnote , p. —.

contact Moscow suggested my telegram 29, October 29<sup>67</sup> but have no

<sup>67</sup> Not printed.

further information available.

Am beginning believe Ho following line which will keep him in contact with French and will assure certain amount French influence here after three Kys united as suggested Deptel 241, September 9 to Saigon. Then, if and when, Communist Govt established in France, Vietnam Govt will progressively apply Marx principles.

However, that French should only now become concerned with development is peculiar. Un Govt<sup>68</sup> sow seeds more nationalist than

<sup>68</sup> Government of the Union of Indochinese states.  
year ago. French to my certain [knowledge?] have known since 1923 that (?) is Ho Chi Minh (?) [apparent garble] stands very high in Third International. They further have strongly suspected for at least year that if Ho was not receiving instructions from Moscow it was only because of technical difficulties in transmission. It is further very peculiar that French concern should be brought to Dept's attention at very moment when French apparently are beginning to [apparent omission] program in Tonkin and when French may be preparing to force Vietnam Govt to collaborate on French terms or to establish puppet govt in its place.

French concern over Communist may well be devised to divert Dept's attention from French policy in Indochina.

O'SULLIVAN

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Washington

December 5, 1946

US URGENT

AMERICAN CONSUL

SAIGON, (INDOCHINA) 305

FOR MOFFAT:

Assume you will see Ho in Hanoi and offer following summary our present thinking as guide.

Keep in mind Ho's clear record as agent international communism, absence evidence recantation Moscow affiliations, confused political situation France and support Ho receiving French Communist Party. Least desirable eventuality would be establishment Communist-dominated, Moscow-oriented state Indochina in view DEPT, which most interested INFO strength non-communist elements Vietnam. Report fully, repeating or requesting DEPT repeat Paris.

Recent occurrences Tonkin cause deep concern. Consider March 6 accord and modus vivendi as result peaceful negotiation provide basis settlement outstanding questions between France and Vietnam and impose responsibility both sides not prejudice future, particularly forthcoming Fontainebleau Conference, by resort force. Unsettled situation such as pertains certain to offer provocations both sides, but for this reason conciliatory patient attitude especially necessary. Intransigence either side and disposition exploit incidents can only retard economic rehabilitation Indochina and cause indefinite postponement conditions cooperation France and Vietnam which both agree essential.

If Ho takes stand non-implementation promise by French of Cochinchina referendum relieves Vietnam responsibility compliance with agreements, you might if you

consider advisable raise question whether he believes referendum after such long disorder could produce worthwhile result and whether he considers compromise on status Cochinchina could possibly be reached through negotiation.

May say American people have welcomed attainments Indochinese in efforts realize praiseworthy aspirations greater autonomy in framework democratic institutions and it would be regrettable should this interest and sympathy be imperilled by any tendency Vietnam administration force issues by intransigence and violence.

May inform Ho Caffery discussing situation French similar frankness. For your INFO, Baudet in BEC 3 conversation stated 1) no question reconquest Indochina as such would be counter French public opinion and probably beyond French military resources, 2) French will continue base policy March 6 accord and modus vivendi and make every effort apply them through negotiation Vietnam, 3) French would resort forceful measures only on restricted scale in case flagrant violation agreements Vietnam, 4) d'Argenlieu's usefulness impaired by outspoken dislike Vietnam officials and replacement perhaps desirable, 5) French Communists embarrassed in pose as guardian French international interests by barrage telegraphic appeals from Vietnam. Caffery will express gratification this statement French policy with observation implementation such policy should go far obviate any danger that 1) Vietnamese irreconcilables and extremists might be in position make capital of situation 2) Vietnamese might be turned irrevocably against West and toward ideologies and affiliations hostile democracies which could result perpetual foment Indochina with consequences all Southeast Asia.

Avoid impression US Govt making formal intervention this juncture. Publicity any kind would be unfortunate.

Paris be guided foregoing.

Acheson  
Acting

SEA:COgburn  
WE:Wwallner



Saigon, December 6, 1946--4 p. m.  
[Received December 7--11:12 p. m.]

472. During visits Mollet to high French officials latter almost invariably stressed French desire arrive at peaceable settlement with Vietnam, commenting difficulty dealing with Vietnam and that latter almost always tried put political aspect to even simplest economic negotiations, and hinting France could and would go only so far in the desired settlement. On interesting remark by Commissioner for Finance was to effect France not working for political federation in French Indo-China but rather build up economic federation in which all interests would be represented and protected—he pointed out inability Vietnam understand purely economic questions and present indifference to such primary matters as affect the national economy. He and another high official stressed willingness even desire for foreign capital investments in FIC if they were for constructive purposes and not (mentioning Chinese specifically) speculative. Commissioner for Finance, however, recommending foreign capital should be united with French knowledge conditions. In above connection question is raised whether French would insist upon larger share capital and/or majority board directors. Commissioner for Economic Affairs was optimistic for next year's rice crop, estimating at least 250,000 tons exportable surplus and if political conditions improve as much as 500,000. Prospect for rubber not so bright (perhaps 30,000-35,000 tons) unless labor question solved and mentioned plan under study import 5,000 Chinese coolies but said FIC natives would possibly not react kindly to this. Mentioned also allocations of FIC rice exports this year have not been taken up completely. Among other points Commissioner for Political Affairs stated personnel all mixed commissions envisaged by *modus vivendi* have been named but still discussion where they are to meet—understand Mixed Military Commission has temporarily suspended its work in Hanoi until situation is clarified. Almost all officials remarked in one form or another Communist character of regime in north and one stated specifically Soviet mission here (mytel 451, November 21 '46) has already violated

“Not printed.

its undertaking not to engage in political activities in FIC.

In comment above and previous telegrams feel French would accept solution protecting interests but will only go so far (witness present stiffer attitude) but hesitate believe French would engage upon full scale military operations unless absolutely forced. French appear to realize no longer possible main gain closed door here and non-French interests will have chance to participate in unquestioned rich economic possibilities. Before this can happen political situation must be settled and in doing this Cochinchina question will be turning point—still believe French will find it difficult to save Cochinchina unless prepared to fight, for in choice between Vietnam and French the Cochinchinese will join former despite dislike of Tonkinese and fear of economic and political exploitation by them.

REED

*The Secretary of State to Certain Missions Abroad*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At London, Moscow, and Nanking.

WASHINGTON, December 17, 1946—1:05 p. m.

SECRET FOR CHIEF OF MISSION

BASIC FRENCH-VIETNAMESE DIFFICULTIES

After conversations with French and Vietnamese officials and British, Chinese and US Consuls Hanoi Mr. Abbot Moffat, who is at present in SEA, has developed views in which Consul Saigon concurs along the following lines:<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 479, December 12, 1946, 5 p. m., from Saigon (851G.00/12-1246), transmitted Mr. Moffat's report in which he stated he had left Hanoi on December 9 before receiving the Department's telegram 305, December 5, 3 p. m., p. —.

The Vietnam Government is in control of a small Communist group, possibly in indirect touch with Moscow and direct touch with Yenan. A nationalist group is utilizing Communist party techniques and discipline with which they are familiar. The people are conservative landowners and attempts to communize the country are secondary and would await successful operation of a nationalist state. Apparently some leaders, like Ho Chi Minh, consider collaboration with the French essential; those like Giap<sup>3</sup> would avoid collaboration fearing

<sup>3</sup> Vo Nguyen Giap, Minister of National Defense.

French domination but might not reject French influence and aid. Nationalist sentiment runs deep among the Vietnamese and does opposition to the French, and they might easily turn against all whites. French influence is important not only as an antidote to Soviet influence but to protect Vietnam and SEA from future Chinese imperialism. Delay in achieving a settlement will progressively diminish the possibility of ultimate French influence.

The honesty of both French and Vietnamese officials is questionable in connection with recent incidents. O'Sullivan believes the Viet

clear that with a different French commander at Haiphong than Colonel Debes, who is notorious for graft and brutality and who has admitted that he cannot control his own troops, the trouble might have been confined to the original incidents.

According to the French, the Vietnamese enlarge their claims after each agreement and are so impractical and doctrinaire that all conversations are ineffectual. The Vietnamese feel that the French renege on each agreement and are trying to reestablish control. However, both say they have approximately the same objectives, although Giap says Vietnam opposes a political Indochinese federation but favors a federation dealing with common economic problems. Moffat has mentioned to the French three apparent basic troubles: (a) complete mutual distrust, (b) failure of the French to resolve their own views on "free state within French Union", (c) almost childish Vietnamese attitude and knowledge of economic questions and vague groping for "independence". Agreement cannot be reached by trying to reach accords on incidental problems. Basic Vietnam powers and relations with France must first be established. Not only new faces are needed but neutral good offices or even mediation may be essential.

BYRNES



*The Secretary of State to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Officers*<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> At Moscow, Nanking, and Saigon.

WASHINGTON, December 20, 1946—10 a. m.

Amb Paris states Montet, Minister Overseas, will leave soon visit all parts Indochina confer with Ho Chi Minh after which he will go Nanking discuss Chinese relations with Indochina. D'Argenlien will arrive Indochina same time as Montet. Caffery says "question

<sup>33</sup> Telegram 6783: December 19, 1946. 5 lines, not printed.

French policy Indochina was important factor during recent political crisis, opinion being sharply increasingly divided on subject. Left-wing parties defended liberal policy toward Vietnam, accusing d'Argenlien, French military, civilian authorities Indochina of sabotaging Mar 6 agreement and *modus vivendi*. Radical Socialists MRP and other center and rightwing parties accused Montet of giving away France's most valuable colony, demanded firmer attitude toward Ho and Vietnam. In speech to Assembly, Communist Ducloux spoke of need for policy protecting interests French union, maintaining interests France everywhere in world. He warned France must not make Indochina same mistakes that cost her position Levant. This moderate but cryptic statement reflects recent Communist caution re Indochina which generally interpreted as designed avoid opposing public opinion which is increasingly anxious over possibility losing Indochina. Caffery remarks Blum Govt's decision send both Montet, d'Argenlien Indochina seems be compromise which avoids any decision between opposing advocates of firm and conciliatory policy. He doubts whether such comp can hope solve successfully serious crisis which arisen Indochina.

BYRNES

*Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs  
(Vincent) to the Under Secretary of State (Acheson)*

[WASHINGTON.] December 23, 1946.

The serious implications of the fighting between the French and the Vietnamese which took place in the Tonkinese towns of Haiphong and Langson during the week of November 20-27 were noted in a memorandum to you of November 26.\* It was feared at that time

\*Not printed.

that a showdown by force was in the making. This now appears to have eventuated. For the past six days, open war has been raging in Tonkin and at several points in Annam. The Vietnamese Government has fled Hanoi and the French are endeavoring to clear the city of remaining Vietnamese guerillas with planes and tanks. Vietnamese casualties during the past month are probably now well over 2,000. Although French casualties have been far lighter, Sainteny (Commissioner for Tonkin and northern Annam) was himself seriously wounded four days ago.

You may wish to make the following points when you see Ambassador Bonnet this afternoon:

1. We are deeply concerned by the outbreak of war in Tonkin and Annam and by the apparent severance of most of the contacts between the French and the Vietnamese and are fully aware of the unhappy position in which the French have been placed;
2. We are gratified by the news that M. Montet (Minister for Overseas France) is proceeding immediately by air to Indochina to obtain first-hand information on the situation;
3. We are aware that such unsettled conditions as now prevail in northern Indochina offer provocation to outside interference and are disturbed lest:

a. The conflict be brought up before the Security Council as a threat to peace;

b. Other powers attempt some form of intervention, in which connection it may be noted that the Chinese press has reported that the dispatch of Chinese troops to the area is being considered owing to the heavy losses sustained by the local Chinese in the November fighting;

*For your information:*

Although the French in Indochina have made far-reaching paper-concessions to the Vietnamese desire for autonomy, French actions on the scene have been directed toward whittling down the powers and the territorial extent of the Vietnam "free state". This process the Vietnamese have continued to resist. At the same time, the French themselves admit that they lack the military strength to reconquer the country. In brief, with inadequate forces, with public opinion sharply at odds, with a government rendered largely ineffective through internal division, the French have tried to accomplish in Indochina what a strong and united Britain has found it unwise to attempt in Burma. Given the present elements in the situation, guerilla warfare may continue indefinitely.

In connection with the possibility of Chinese intervention in Indochina, the Chinese Embassy in London has approached the Foreign Office to propose joint Chinese-British intervention in Indochina and the Chinese Embassy in Paris has approached our Embassy in Paris to propose Chinese-British-American intervention. It is believed that the Chinese Embassy here may approach us to the same purpose. If so, it is considered that we should reply as the British replied, to the effect that Montet is en route to Indochina to review the situation, that the French line in Indochina will probably be clarified as French internal politics emerge from their present confusion, and that an offer of mediation at this time would probably be resented and rejected by the French.

J[OHN] C[AETER] V[INCENT]

8516.00/12-2346: Telegram

*The Vice Consul at Hanoi (O'Sullivan) to the Secretary of State*

HANOI, December 23, 1946—9 p. m.

[Received December 24—1:35 p. m.]

154. Reasons why Vietnamese attacked French December 19 unclear.

However, theories here are: (1) Result orders from Moscow (a) possibly simply to upset Southeast Asia, (b) possibly to give French Communist Party, should it take power when present Blum Government goes, opportunity to make quick favorable settlement with Vietnamese thus enabling French Communists to pose as "protectors of French interests" thereby increasing CP strength in France; (2) Result settlement Japanese obtained from Holland by fighting while negotiating as Vietnamese apparently lost all hope satisfactory settlement when return d'Argenlien announced.

Repeat to Paris.

O'SULLIVAN



8510.00/12-2446

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington

al

December 24, 1946

AMEMBASSY

PARIS.  
6586

The Under Secretary asked Bonnet to call yesterday afternoon to discuss the situation in Indochina. Mr. Acheson said that we are deeply concerned by the outbreak of hostilities in Tonkin and Annam and are fully aware of the unhappy situation in which the French find themselves. We had anticipated such a situation developing in November and events have confirmed our fears. While we have no wish to offer to mediate under present conditions we do want the French GOVT to know that we are ready and willing to do anything which it might consider helpful in the circumstances. We have been gratified to learn of Moutet's mission and have confidence in his moderation and broad viewpoint. We believe however that the situation is highly inflammatory and if present unsettled conditions continue, there is a possibility that other powers might attempt to bring the matter up before the Security Council. If this happens, as in the case of Indonesia, the question will arise whether the matter is one of purely French internal concern or a situation likely to disturb the peace. Other powers might likewise attempt some form of intervention as has been suggested in the Chinese press. We would be opposed to such steps, but from every point of view it seems important that the question be settled as soon as possible. Mr. Acheson added that he wondered whether the French would attempt to reconquer the country through military force which was a step that the British had found unwise to attempt in Burma.

Bonnet said that he had little direct info with regard to the present situation in Indochina but referred to Leon Blum's speech in the Assembly this morning. He summarized important points of the speech which he said clearly indicated that Blum's policy is to settle the question as far as possible by conciliatory means and that this was the purpose of Moutet's visit. He said that Blum had reiterated that French policy is to assure the independence (within the French empire) of Viet Nam and complete self GOVT. It was unfortunate that it had been impossible up to the present to implement the far reaching concessions embodied in the French agreement with Viet Nam.

He said that personally he would be surprised if the Chinese brought the question up before the Security Council at this time for he felt that the Nanking GOVT was sympathetic to the French position in Indochina. He concluded by saying that he would inform his GOVT of our friendly interest and of our deep concern over the situation and let us know the reaction from Paris.

BYRNES

(Continued)

WASHINGTON, December 27, 1946—7 p. m.

8317. Urtels 10216, Dec 21 and 10245, Dec 24.<sup>48</sup> No Chinese pro-

<sup>48</sup> See footnote, p. —.

posal received here for intervention Indochina. Even such approach, Dept reaction will be negative with reply based same considerations emphasized by Brit ForOff in reply such suggestion by Chinese, namely (1) possibility results from Montet trip, (2) likely clarification French line Indochina as French internal politics emerge from confusion, and (3) certainty offer of mediation would be resentfully rejected by French.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Telegram 10279, December 30, 1946, 1 p. m., from London, reported that the British Foreign Office was gratified at the Department's similar position and stated that the Chinese Embassy was being informed of British rejection of the proposed intervention in Indochina (8516.00/12-3046).

Sent to London as 8317. Repeated to Paris as 6608; Saigon as 319; and Nanking as 1244.

ACHESON

8516.00/12-3046: Telegram

*The Consul at Saigon (Reed) to the Secretary of State*

SAIGON, December 30, 1946—1 p. m.

[Received 10:21 p. m.]

499. Leclerc arrived Saturday <sup>22</sup> p. m. with many his original staff

<sup>50</sup> December 28.

[and] is proceeding Hanoi Tuesday. After conference with Leclerc, Montet left for Cambodia, Laos and Argenlieu for Hanoi Sunday a. m. French making progress in north and west and proposal from Vietnam military leader [to] withdraw his troops from city is being favorably considered. Big question now with whom Montet can deal, pro-Vietnam elements insisting still can treat with Cobue, most observers think this unlikely. Solution as I have previously reported may be creation new Vietnam Government, say under Bao Dai<sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Emperor of Annam who abdicated in August 1945.

and/or Tam (now in Nanking) with which French can treat without losing face and which will have influence with native population. Many natives definitely tired this seemingly endless insecurity and want chance resume peaceful life. With diplomatic handling, solution can be obtained but extremist element will continue make trouble possibly long time to come. Not impossible Vietnam Government thus created will claim only Tonkin. Annam as overheard remark Montet to Ty (Vice President Cochin China Government) indicated French backing independent Cochin China. Unquestionably attack and atrocities (from two to five hundred French civilians killed) have roused French feeling—even Montet surprisingly outspoken—and until all other means exhausted French will be disinclined accept mediation.

Department please repeat Paris, London, Nanking.

REED



*The Secretary of State to the Vice Consul at Hanoi (O'Sullivan)*<sup>95</sup>

"The Department also sent information telegrams, giving the gist of this telegram to Paris, London, Nanking, and Saigon.

WASHINGTON, December 31, 1946—7 p. m.

25. No objection your acting humanitarian grounds as described

until 160 Dec 28<sup>th</sup> or, with French agreeing, in any other strictly local,

<sup>95</sup> In this telegram Vice Consul O'Sullivan reported that he had informed the Chinese Consul General at Hanoi that he would be willing to aid in any capacity to which French authorities gave approval and requested the Department's instructions on this point. The Chinese had suggested that the Vietnamese might wish unofficial presence of British and American consular officers in any meeting with the French. (8516.00/12-2846)

military, non-political situation in order save lives. You should not, however, without express Dept authorization become involved any situation any way which could be interpreted as mediation basic political issues between opposing parties. For your secret info. Acting Secy in Dec 23 conversation with French Amb here expressed our concern outbreak hostilities and our readiness do anything which might be considered helpful but stated we have no wish offer mediate present conditions. Further on receipt info that Chinese had approached Brit FonOff and AmEmb Paris with proposal joint mediation. Dept decision was adverse this initiative in view certainty resentful rejection by French. Brit reaction also negative. Chinese desire extend influence Indochina seems clear and French Communists ready make instant capital any appearance outside intervention Indochina as "foreign imperialism."

BYRNES

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

AMEMBASSY

January 8, 1947

7 pm

PARIS

75.

DEPT's present policy on arms and armaments approves QUOTE sales to France by the FLC of reasonable quantities of military supplies except in cases which appear to relate to Indochina UNQUOTE. French requests for purchase surplus military supplies in Burma and Philippines for use Indochina have been consistently refused on basis this policy which consequently should be well known to FOMOFF and OFLC Paris. Since French have apparently stated their proposed purchase ammunition subject URTEL 33 is related to Indochina hostilities, DEPT could not approve its resale to them by Belgians. You may wish intimate as much to FOMOFF before receipt note you anticipate.

BYRNES

WE:W:allner

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

URGENT  
AMEMBASSY

February 3, 1947.  
8 pm

PARIS

431

There is reason for increasing concern over situation as it is developing in Indochina and for that reason I feel you might well take early occasion to have frank talk with Ramadier or Bidault or both somewhat along lines conversations you have already had with Blum, but at this time going in fact beyond position you took in those talks. We have only very friendliest feelings toward France and we are anxious in every way we can to support France in her fight to regain her economic, political and military strength and to restore herself as in fact one of major powers of world. In spite any misunderstanding which might have arisen in minds French in regard to our position concerning Indochina they must appreciate that we have fully recognized France's sovereign position in that area and we do not wish to have it appear that we are in any way endeavoring undermine that position, and French should know it is our desire to be helpful and we stand ready assist any appropriate way we can to find solution for Indochinese problem. At same time we cannot shut our eyes to fact that there are two sides this problem and that our reports indicate both a lack French understanding of other side (more in Saigon than in Paris) and continued existence dangerously outmoded colonial outlook and methods in area. Furthermore, there is no escape from fact that trend of times is to effect that colonial empires in XIX Century sense are rapidly becoming thing of past. Action Brit in India and Burma and Dutch in Indonesia are outstanding examples this trend, and French themselves took cognizance of it both in new Constitution and in their agreements with Vietnam. On other hand we do not lose sight fact that Ho Chi Minh has direct Communist connections and it should be obvious that we are not interested in seeing colonial empire administrations supplanted by philosophy and political organizations emanating from and



controlled by Kremlin. Fact does remain, however, that a situation does exist in Indochina which can no longer be considered, if it ever was considered, to be of a local character. If that situation continues deteriorate some country in direct interest is very likely to bring matter before Security Council under Chapter 11 of Charter. We have no intention taking such action ourselves at this time, but French will surely appreciate that we do have a vital interest in political and economic well being this area. If some country should bring matter before Security Council we would find it difficult to oppose an investigation Indochinese problem unless negotiations between parties were going on. It might be added that it would not in our estimation be in France's long-range interest to use her veto position to keep matter from coming before Council. Frankly we have no solution of problem to suggest. It is basically matter for two parties to work out themselves and from your reports and those from Indochina we are led to feel that both parties have endeavored to keep door open to some sort of settlement. We appreciate fact that Vietnam started present fighting in Indochina on December 19 and that this action has made it more difficult for French to adopt a position of generosity and conciliation. Nevertheless we hope that French will find it possible to be more than generous in trying to find a solution.

MARSHALL

WE:PTCulbertson

## OUTGOING TELEGRAM

AMEMBASSY,

May 13, 1947.

8 pm

PARIS.

1737

We becoming increasingly concerned by slow progress toward settlement Indochina dispute. We fully appreciate French are making effort reach satisfactory settlement and hope visit Commissioner Bollaert to Indochina will produce concrete results. The following considerations, however, are submitted for your use any conversations you may have with French authorities at appropriate time this subject. We recognize it might not be desirable make such approach to newly constituted government in first days its reorganization, but nevertheless feel early appropriate opportunity might be found inform French Gov of our concern in this matter.

Key our position is our awareness that in respect developments affecting position Western democratic powers in southern Asia, we essentially in same boat as French, also as British and Dutch. We cannot conceive setbacks to long-range interests France which would not also be setbacks our own. Conversely we should regard close association France and members French Union as not only to advantage peoples concerned, but indirectly our own.

In our view, southern Asia in critical phase its history with seven new nations in process achieving or struggling independence or autonomy. These nations include quarter inhabitants world and their future course, owing sheer weight populations, resources they command, and strategic location, will be momentous factor world stability. Following relaxation European controls, internal racial, religious, and national differences could plunge new nations into violent discord, or already apparent anti-Western Pan-Asiatic tendencies could become dominant political force, or Communists could capture control. We consider as best safeguard against these eventualities a



continued close association between newly-autonomous peoples and powers which have long been responsible their welfare. In particular we recognize Vietnamese will for indefinite period require French material and technical assistance and enlightened political guidance which can be provided only by nation steeped like France in democratic tradition and confirmed in respect human liberties and worth individual.

We equally convinced, however, such association must be voluntary to be lasting and achieve results, and that protraction present situation Indochina can only destroy basis voluntary cooperation, leave legacy permanent bitterness, and irrevocably alienate Vietnamese from France and those values represented by France and other Western democracies.

While fully appreciating difficulties French position this conflict, we feel there is danger in any arrangement which might provide Vietnamese opportunity compare unfavorably their own position and that of other peoples southern Asia who have made tremendous strides toward autonomy since war.

While we are still ready and willing do anything we can which might be considered helpful, French will understand we not attempting come forward with any solution our own or intervene in situation. However, they will also understand we inescapably concerned with situation Far East generally, upon which developments Indochina likely have profound effect.

Plain fact is that Western democratic system is on defensive in almost all emergent nations southern Asia and, because identified by peoples these nations with what they have considered former denial their rights, is particularly vulnerable to attacks by demagogic leaders political movements of either ultra-nationalist or Communist nature which promise redress and revenge past so-called wrongs and inequalities. Signs development anti-Western Asiatic consciousness already multiplying, of which Inter-Asian CONF an example. Unanimity support for Vietnamese among other Asiatic countries very striking, even leading to moves Burma, India, and Malaya send volunteer forces their



8516.00/5-1347

assistance. Vietnam cause proving rallying-cry for all anti-Western forces and playing in hands Communists all areas. We fear continuation conflict may jeopardize position all Western democratic powers in southern Asia and lead to very eventualities of which we most apprehensive.

We confident French fully aware dangers inherent in situation and therefore venture express renewed hope they will be most generous attempt find early solution which, by recognizing legitimate desires Vietnamese, will restore peace and deprive anti-democratic forces of powerful weapon.

For your INFO, evidence that French Communists are being directed accelerate their agitation French colonies even extent lose much popular support France (URTEL 1719 Apr 25) may be indication Kremlin prepared sacrifice temporary gains with 40 million French to long range colonial strategy with 600 million dependent people, which lends great urgency foregoing views. French position Indochina dispute since DEC 19, which based on Vietnam initiative attack, seems DEPT dangerously one-sided in ignoring Debes attack Haiphong NOV 23 and understandable Vietnam contention that stand had be made some point view steady French encroachments after MAR 6 on authority and territory Vietnam (e.g., establishment Cochinchinese REP, occupation southern Annam and Moi Plateau, and Dalat plan French-dominated Federation to which Vietnam would be subservient,) DEPT much concerned lest French efforts find QUOTE true representatives Vietnam UNQUOTE with whom negotiate result creation impotent puppet GOVT along lines Cochinchina regime, or that restoration Bao Dai may be attempted, implying democracies reduced resort monarchy as weapon against Communism. You may refer these further views if nature your conversations French appears warrant.

Saigon and Hanoi should be guided by this TEL in any conversations Bollaert.

MARSHALL.

SEA:COgburn

OUTGOING TELEGRAM  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

US Urgent

Sep 11 1947

AMEMBASSY

PARIS 3433

For the Ambassador

We have read with concern recent telegrams from our officers in Indochina (repeated to you) to the effect that local French military are seriously contemplating an offensive against Vietnamese in dry season beginning at end this month. It is difficult for us give credence these reports in light French economic, financial and food position. It is obvious that such an offensive, if it took place under these conditions, would have serious effect on public opinion here which would be reflected in a Congress which will be called upon to consider extensive financial aid for western European nations, including France.

Please make appropriate informal inquiries and report urgently. For your info Dept considering approach French on apparently rapidly deteriorating prospects for Franco-Vietnam settlement and is awaiting your reply this point.

MARSHALL

Consulate  
Hanoi, French Indochina  
September 12, 1947

Rec. -----  
Oct 7, 1947

ACTION SUBJECT: Speech of Emile Bollaert on September 10 on French Policy  
PE-enc in Indochina

INFO  
OCD-enc  
DCR  
EUR-enc THE HONORABLE  
SPA  
ONE THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
WAR  
NAVY WASHINGTON, D.C.  
CIG  
POL SIR:

I have the honor to refer to my telegram number 286 of September 11, 8 a.m. and to report further on the speech delivered by EMILE BOLLAERT, High Commissioner of France for Indo China. There are enclosed five copies of the speech as published by "L'Entente" in a supplement to its regular daily edition.

The site selected by Mr. Bollaert was HADONG, a provincial capital which lies 10 miles southeast of Hanoi, and which was, for a time, headquarters of the Viet Nam Government after its flight from Hanoi in December, 1946. Hadong apparently was chosen as the place for the speech that M. Bollaert might make reference to "this razed city of Tonkin, in ruins still haunted by memories of terror". Robert Sherrod of "Time" had previously described it as "probably the most thoroughly war-wrecked city in the world."

The speech itself was delivered at about 5 p.m. in a public square. Around M. Bollaert, when he spoke, were gathered the several hundred civilians (white and Vietnamese) and the many military officers who had been invited. Some 1,500 Vietnamese, largely peasant women and children, were kept behind ropes set up to form a square in the center of which was the rostrum that the Vietnamese guerrillas had tried to burn the evening previous.

This speech represents the most important declaration of French policy that has been made in the last year. M. Bollaert, it will be recalled, was originally named High Commissioner for Indo China, replacing Admiral THIERRY D'ARGENLIEU in March. He arrived in Indo China early in April, and subsequently returned to Paris in June.

He was in Saigon again in late July and shortly thereafter revealed to the press that he intended to deliver a major policy declaration in

C O P Y



Tonkin in the course of the next month. He came to Hanoi on August 7, 1947. The Ramadier Government, at that time, faced the difficult questions of the Statute of Algeria and the Municipal Election law and was under attack from within its own party. Bollaert, instead of delivering his speech, when the government.....No less than four "conseils restreints des Ministres" and one full "Conseil", plus a series of private interviews between Bollaert, the Generals de Pellet and Valluy, and Ramadier were needed to settle the final form of the speech, which I am informed, was much changed from the original version.

The speech, then, was word by word and sentence by sentence laboriously assembled by the Ramadier Government, and is the logical conclusion of France policy as pursued in Northern Indo China for the past two years. For as the French military position in Tonkin has improved militarily, so in almost exact ratio has declined their willingness to make concessions. M. Bollaert's speech represents a definite retreat from the French position taken in the March 6, 1946, Accords, and indeed its terms on their face are no more liberal than the 1884 Treaty of the Protectorate.

Stripped of its verbiage, the speech constituted an oblique offer to the Vietnamese people to bring forth a "representative government" which would accept the terms offered by M. Bollaert on which there was to be no "bargaining" as this "would be in truth unworthy of such a noble cause." This seems to be designed as an escape clause for the French government and is directed against Ho Chi Minh with whom the French apparently will deal only in a last extremity. At the present time, the French have no intention of dealing with Ho and should he accept the terms as offered, the French would unquestionably demand the immediate surrender of his arms and armies for "the weapons must grow silent."

Bollaert first defined the goal toward which "the Vietnamese people aspire freedom within the French Union and unity of the three Kys". He said this freedom is in no way restricted other than "by the limits forced on it by the fact that these territories belong to the French Union". But France, he maintained "does not take any position with regard to the problem" of unity of the Kys save that "she requires that the Union should not be made under pressure and according to totalitarian formulas universally condemned". Then should the Union be derived from the popular wish duly expressed, local particularisms should be preserved, and the cohesion of the Annamite countries should "be founded not on the interest of only one but on the confidence and friendship of all", he stated.

As for the states, separated or unified as they wish, M. Bollaert said "we are ready to hand over to the fully qualified governments the managements of public affairs" which means the organization without French interference of "its representative institutions, judicial proceedings, its own finance, education, social legislation, and hospitals".

The states of the peninsula, M. Bollaert then foresaw by the facts of geography have certain common interests which will require common policies. He pointed out that "all right minded people" will concede that among other

things, a "common customs system, common currency, and common policy of immigration" is necessary. (This latter was added because of the problems posed by the proximity of China.) These states, M. Bollaert continued, will also plan together the reconstruction of Indo China in which "of course, we (the French) have our own point of view".

"This collaboration is, after all, unavoidable and all those concerned (the French Republic being one of them) will have to decide together how, under the supervision of the High Commissioner,.....

.....also be "commissioners of the republic" to defend "French economic and cultured interests".

"The High Commissioner, or his delegate (whose functions or position is not specified), will take good care that our countrymen are enabled to enjoy all the democratic freedom enjoyed by the citizens of the states belonging to the Union and will see to it that our concerns do not fare worse than local ones; the citizens and concerns of Indochina being, in return, certain of finding the same advantages in France. The High Commissioner or his delegate will therefore insist on ascertaining that the personal and material status of French subjects is never one-sidedly changed."

And finally, M. Bollaert said, the High Commissioner will have a special status drawn up for the "southern and northern minorities of Indo China whose rights are considered by the French as having a sacred character."

All the Indochinese states will be, M. Bollaert said, in the French Union which "must frame in the autonomy of the Indo Chinese people...it does not restrain private immunities...the French Union is resilient and dynamic enough to allow a nation to develop freely in framework...it is an aggregate of forces, ever on the move, each through a never ceasing interplay of exchange, giving and taking at one and the same time...it is in the French Union that men will find their *raison d'être*".

But, he added, the French Union can have only one army and one diplomacy. "The police forces of the associated states of Indo China will assure in time of peace internal order on their own territory; in case of foreign aggression, they will be integrated in the armed forces of the French Union for the defense of their countries and of the Union."

M. Bollaert also promised that the French "would not take reprisals and that all political and military prisoners would be liberated reciprocally. He made a thrust at the "originators of the December 19th aggression" who have lost "much of their credit with the French people". He extolled the French Union and its accomplishment and possibilities at some length and concluded:



"This peace depends upon you (the Vietnamese people) to obtain it."

## ANALYSIS

### Individual States

The speech left the way open for unification of the three Kys which the French feel as a foregone conclusion. The French cleverly do not propose any solution but leave the burden of preparing a plan acceptable to all Kys in the hands of the Vietnamese.

The status of the states, either unified or separate, is one of "liberty and freedom" within the French Union. There is no recognition of Vietnam as an "etat Libre", such as was done in the March 6 agreement. There is nowhere any mention of "independence" save in the statement by M. Bollaert in Vietnamese: "BOC LAP TRONG KHOI LAM HIEP THAT" (Independence within the framework of the French Union.) Nor will France hand over anything to the States which resembles "sovereignty". Rather she will give only "public administration".

This omission is commented upon by the AFP in a September 12 despatch from Hanoi as follows:

"On the other hand, French circles expressed appreciation for the liberalism of the French government, a liberalism which may reduce the tension. It is only regretted that the word 'independence', as being capable of producing a (favorable) psychological shock, was not pronounced."

Each state or states will organize its representative institutions, its justice, its finances, its education, its social legislation and its hospitals.

The exact judicial formula has not yet been settled, however. Didier MACHEL, Political Counsellor to the High Commissioner, whom I saw after the speech was delivered, pointed out it was uncertain whether the courts of the states would have jurisdiction over French and foreigners within its territory. He did not specify whether Laotians and Cambodians would be considered foreigners with a special status. He suggested, as his personal opinion, that perhaps there might be a solution in the establishment of "mixed tribunals" or possibly mixed or wholly French appellate courts over Vietnamese courts of first instance.

The state governments will have the help, if they so desire of "our fonctionnaires and our technicians", another retreat from the previous position as only French "counsellors, technicians, and experts" were mentioned in Article 4 of the *Mokus Vivendi* of September 14. Finally, France solemnly renounced all administration direct and indirect. France solemnly renounced "direct" administration in the June 6, 1884 Treaty which states in Article 7: The (French) residents (in Tonkin) will avoid treating details of interior administration in the provinces.



## Grouping of States

Bollaert did not abolish the "Federation". He diluted and watered it down and his staff maintain that it is dead. However, at least three "common services" (a euphonistic name for federal services) will exist: finance, immigration, and customs. It is probably an economic fact that if there were no federation in Indo China it would probably be necessary to invent one. Bollaert indicated in his speech that there might be more "common services" than those he specifically mentioned. Didier MICHEL maintained vehemently there would not be; that the concept of the Federation, as proposed by D'Argenlieu, had been completely abandoned. However, the history of French administration in Indo China is not one to inspire confidence in such limitations as the French voluntarily place on the activity of their services.

No where is there any mention of the "Surete", that ubiquitous French combination of an FBI (for Europeans) and a Gestapo (for Vietnamese). MICHEL maintained the Surete of the state or states which emerge would be in the hands of the local government. He said that in Laos and Cambodia there was not a single French member of the Surete which was entirely in the hands of the indigenous peoples. He considered that during the early stages of development in Vietnam, there would be two Suretes which would then be merged as gradually French personnel would be eliminated. "You will understand, I believe, that the situation in Tonkin is not such that we can eliminate, at the present time, the French Surete completely without danger to French lives", he said.

There is no good explanation of why Bollaert did not mention the eventual disappearance of the Surete in his speech. Nor is there any good reason why it was left to Premier RAMADIER rather than Bollaert to state in a Paris Press Conference that the government "undertook to eliminate the network of the administrative corps which control or direct the administrative service".

## Special Status

Special status will be prepared by the High Commissioner for the minorities of the North and South whose rights have, since the war, assured an overwhelming "sacredness" to the French. It might be mentioned that the Dutch in Indonesia and, for a time, the British in Burma developed similar sentiments at about the same time.

The Mols of the south - the Nung, Tho, Meo, Nan, Lolo, Muong, Black and White Thai, among others in the north - will become more or less special wards of the French. Didier MICHEL did not care to elaborate what kind of a status the French proposed for these people. This is the logical development of French policy vis-a-vis minorities set as early as April 9, 1946, as revealed by documents which the Vietnam government

obtained from the French Headquarters by ways more or less devious. It is also interesting to note that throughout last year, French officials stridently denied that they intended to enclose Vietnam in a framework of directly administered French territories.

### External Relations

Vietnam or the individual three Kys are flatly denied any foreign representation as such. It or they will have the right to participate in the representation of the French Union particularly in the surrounding countries where it or they have economic and cultural interests to defend. But Vietnamese diplomats will represent, regardless of their grade, only the interests of the French Union.

### Army

The States will have only armed forces which will be integrated into the single army of the French Union. The army of the "etat libre" of March 6 has thus disappeared although in time of peace the police forces of the associated states of Indo China will assure "internal order".

### Commissioners

The Commissioners of the Republic will be attached to the local government. According to MICHEL, he or they will have only a very small staff: a political, economic, and possibly a cultural adviser or counsellor. His or their task will be to protect French interests. His position as defined is very nebulous but it will develop great strength as the defender of French interests. It offers such possibilities that no attempt can yet be made to evaluate its workings.

### CONCLUSION

The position taken in the speech is the logical development of French policy in Indo China. As France's military strength improved with willingness to make concessions diminished. Before French troops were in place in Tonkin, France was willing to concede recognition of Vietnam as an "etat libre", having its own government, parliament, army and finances. By the *Modus Vivendi* of September 14 France was demanding much strengthened Federation with control of customs of primary importance. It was on the willingness of the French to enforce this customs control that the Haiphong incident of November 21 developed. It was from the desire of the French to reduce the Vietnamese Government to impotence that the French counter-position of November 23 with its famous ultimatum was taken.

At the present time, there are only two reasons for France to make any concessions whatsoever; world opinion (to which the Indochinese French have always been more or less immune - note the pre-war opium monopoly) and the fact that they are faced with armed resistance.

But should this resistance be broken in Tonkin during the coming fall campaign, there is no doubt whatsoever that the final settlement will in practice be even less liberal than its present form.

As it now stands, the French position as expressed by M. Bollaert is an elastic instrument which will become a vise if the Vietnam Government is crushed but which, if this task proves beyond French military strength, can be stretched even to cover negotiations with Ho.

Respectfully yours,

James L. O'Sullivan  
American Vice Consul

Enclosures: Five Copies of M. Bollaert's speech on September 10

800

JLC'Sullivan:jcf

cc: Consulate General Saigon



851G.00/9-121

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Incoming Telegram

Rec'd September 12, 1947  
2:30 p.m.

FROM: Paris

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 3715, September 12, 4 p.m.

I talked informally to Bidault along the lines of  
Dept's 3433 September 11. He said he understood our  
point of view and as far as he knew there are no plans  
for a military offensive against Vietnamese in dry  
season beginning at end this month.

CAFFERY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ACTION COPY

INCOMING TELEGRAM

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Control 4925

Rec'd September 16, 1947  
3:30 p.m.

FROM: Paris

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 3753, September 14, Noon.

In absence of Pandet, situation in Indochina discussed with his assistant, Boissacien.

He stated no information yet received from French authorities in Indochina regarding reaction to Bollaert speech while information regarding developments in Hong Kong limited to press dispatches. He confirmed Foreign Office information in regards Bao Dai, but said reports in recent weeks indicated growing national support for him based largely on a reaction against the totalitarian methods and totalitarian organization of Ho Chi Minh's government.

Boissacien asserted that no official negotiations are being conducted with Bao Dai but admitted that a French official had been seen by Hong Kong for "discussion" purposes. He indicated French are fully aware that ultimate objective of Bao Dai and groups supporting him (i.e., complete independence) are little different than Ho's and that only advantage for France in dealing with Bao Dai would be presumably his less "rigid and doctrinaire" viewpoint.

Boissacien confirmed Pandet's pessimistic views regarding Bollaert's speech and the possibility of successful negotiations resulting therefrom. However, he pointed out that while the Bollaert offer might be regarded as a stop backward as regards control of the armed forces and separate diplomatic relations, it was a step forward on two points: (1) the formal abandonment of the idea of an Indochinese Federation with supervisory powers; (2) the acceptance in principle of the United Nations Three Big

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OCT 2 1947

3753, September 14, Bonn, from Paris

without necessity any reference. Boisselion said that the watering-down of Kollasch's original ideas was due largely to the fear of possible repercussions in Germany.

In conclusion, he thought that local military actions might take place with a view to improving communications and eliminating Vietnamese soldiers and islands, but based on no plans for a "fundamental military offensive".

Sent Department as 3753; reported London 781.

CAMPBELL

DES:DB



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Control 5638

Rec'd October 18, 1947

7:17 a.m.

FROM: Nanking

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 2096, October 18, 2 p.m.

In conversation with Embassy officer on subject of Indochina, Vice FOMIN George Yeh and Director of European Dept FOMOFF expressed following views:

It is difficult to foresee a settlement of Indochina question under current French policy, which is naing position of other powers, particularly China and US, extremely difficult. It is unlikely that a govt can successfully be formed without participation of Ho Chi Minh, as Ho and his group are the only ones having a genuinely popular following. Attempts to alienate Ho's adherents under present circumstances unlikely of success. Persistence of French in present military course carries danger of forcing entire freedom movement into hands of Extreme, Communist elements.

Ho is regarded as Communist but many Vietrinh leaders are not. Vice Minister is impressed with Ho's personality and commented that Ho was an abler individual for example than Sjahrir of Indonesian Govt, both men being personally known to him. The question of possible danger to China from a Communist-influenced regime adjacent to her southern border did not appear to be of critical importance.

The National Union Front does not have a solid popular base. It consists in the main of a group of prominent figures and if these leaders were removed from the picture (the recent assassinations in Saigon and Hanoi were recalled) the movement would probably have little force left. As regards Bao-

Dai "the

#2096, October 18, 2 p.m., from Nanking

Dai "the Chinese people would not regard favorably the reestablishment of a monarchy in Indochina. Bao-Dai has not recently been in Nanking (REDEPTTEL 1205, September 29) and FONOFF officials made oblique reference to a "French story" to that effect.

Embassy comment: while no direct statement was vouchsafed by FONOFF officials as to Chinese attitude toward National Union or Nguyen Hai Than, foregoing would appear to indicate FONOFF does not contemplate support of Bao-Dai who would seem to be an indispensable element in present French plans and that a dubious view, at best, is taken of National Union movement. As Dept is aware there are diverse Chinese elements interested in the Indochina situation and views given above do not purport to represent crystallized Chinese attitude. No allusion was made during interview to possible mediation by third power or powers.

STUART

BB:DCB

# Department of State

Jan. 29, 1948

Washington, 1:10 p.m.

NO. \_\_\_\_\_

SUBJECT: INDIA'S POSITION REGARDING INDOCHINA

2291

To

Certain American Diplomatic and Consular Officers.

Embassy, New Delhi, has reported following regarding the Government of India's attitude toward Indochina as furnished by official External Affairs Dept:

"As frequently expressed by Nehru, India has deep sympathy for efforts southeast Asian countries fulfill national aspirations and improve their peoples living standards. Notwithstanding this India will hesitate submit question Indochina UN because (one) France as permanent member SC could veto any action contrary French interests and (two) GOI not convinced Vietnam exercises de facto authority Indochina or, in contrast Indonesia, it represents viewpoint majority Indochinese. For time being India's sympathy Indochinese aspirations will take negative forms such as refusing permit India be used as base French operations in Indochina and GOI will not take positive steps toward intervention. Lastly India would not like submit Indochinese question UN as long as GOI GOI dispute regarding Kashmir under consideration by UN.

"Embassy feels that above represents true picture of External Affairs Ministry's attitude. This attitude, however, subject to reversal in case Nehru becomes imbued with feeling that French oppressing Indochinese in view his frequent emotional approach such problems. Extremely unlikely India will take any action regarding Indochina until decision re dispute with Pakistan handed down by UN."

8516.00/1-2948

-CS/V-

REDUCTION  
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MARSHALL

Marshall

✓ At Dixie Pangkok, London, Moscow, Hanking, Paris, Saigon, and Hanoi  
✓ Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Indian Prime Minister.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington

AMCONSUL

Control 470

SAIGON  
21

February 3, 1948 7 p.m.

Mil Attache Bangkok reports Pham Ngoc Thach one of Ho Chi Minh's chief lieutenants in course recent visit (1) said he departing for India 29 Jan with petition signed by Ho Chi Minh requesting UN intervention (2) confirmed suspicion previously voiced by AMER correspondent of imminent offensive which certain involve fighting in city Saigon.

Sent Saigon as 21 ; rptd New Delhi as 79 .

Saigon repeat Hanoi.

MARSHALL

Colonel Reginald F. C. Vance

"President of the Provisional Government of Vietnam Democratic Republic."

COPY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INCOMING TELEGRAM

SECRET

Control 5884

Rec'd February 19, 1948

12:03 p.m.

FROM: Hanoi

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 31, February 19, Noon

Re APF story February 17 Cannes that Bao Dai had postponed departure Hong Kong for indefinite period, usually reliable Vietnamese source gives following summary recent events.

At Bai dalong conference December with Bollaert, Bao Dai signed accord of two articles: (1) France recognizes independence and unity Vietnam; (2) once independent, Vietnam will freely adhere to French union. When General Xuan, Tran Van Ly, and Diem (who according this source continues as "eminence grise" Nationalist) met Bao Dai Hong Kong after Bai dalong conference, Diem persuaded Bao Dai signature of above accord was tactical error, that Vietnam should only bind itself to France by alliance, not French union. (To what extent this position taken for bargaining purposes not clear). Finally decided best method of allowing Bao Dai withdraw gracefully from commitment was to take position he signed only as individual, not for his people, then have "assembly of notables" call for his return Indochina as emperor of state freely allied with France.

This strategy now being applied. Bao Dai, who anticipated failure Geneva conversations, intends for present to remain France where he can deal directly with Bidault, Schuman in preference Bollaert. Meanwhile opening gun in preparation public opinion for calling "assembly

-2- #31, February 19, Noon, from Hanoi

of notables" by General Xuan was article by Nguyen Tran Long in Saigon journal ECHO DU VIETNAM of February 17, demanding representation all groups including "resistants." Hanoi's THODISU, which in November sabotaged Xuan's proposals for assembly of "hommes distingues," will beat drums here and Tran Van Ly's paper in Hue.

Appears Bao Dai aware of fact recent French promises local population re his early return, combined with lack of French success in military operations, have strengthened his bargaining position.

Repeat to Paris; sent Saigon

RENDALL



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INCOMING TELEGRAM

Control 3885

Rec'd May 12, 1948

9:14 p.m.

FROM: Paris

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 2567, May 12, 6 p.m.

Baeyens has informed me that French Government has authorized Bollaert to approve formation provisional Vietnam government headed by Xuan but to insist that seat of government be located at either Hanoi or Hue and not at Saigon. Bollaert-Xuan negotiations will be conducted on basis Bay of Along protocol which Xuan will countersign. Bao Dai will countersign agreement reached with Xuan.

Baeyens stated Foreign Office was not optimistic as to extent popular support provisional government could achieve and expressed hope that representatives from Annam and Tonkin would be of sufficient stature to offset at least in part government's being characterized as French puppet.

He had no information other than press report of early Bao Dai-Bollaert meeting and Bao Dai's visit to Europe Foreign Office endeavoring to block latter which they consider could only lend support to charges of puppet government.

Department pass Saigon as No. 18.

CAFFERY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Control 9359

Rec'd May 29, 1948  
8:22 a.m.

FROM: Nanking

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 971, May 29, 10 a.m.

Responsible Foreign Office officials states that according to Chinese information very little enthusiasm had been aroused among Indochina natives by news of formation of government by General Nguyen Van Xuan. He expressed doubt that much more result would be obtained by new group than was attained by local administrative committees, unless Bao Dai came back. He believed Bao Dai was adopting wait-and-see attitude and that his decision whether to return would wait upon signs of favorable reaction to government by native elements. Upon being questioned, officials said latter point would in his view be more important with Bao Dai than question of independence; that Bao Dai would himself in the end accept about what Pollaert has already offered (given appearance of popular support) despite counsel of most his advisers to hold firm for independence, and this even though he incurred risk of playing role of Henry Pu Yi for French. He said Bao Dai's supporters are insisting more strongly on foreign policy independence, being less intractable on question of military control, probably in realization that native levies would be incapable for some time of putting down any continuing internal revolt.

While all Chinese elements are not one on line of action to be followed in Indochina, Foreign Office itself seems to distrust Bao Dai, viewing him as possible vehicle for restoration French prewar status. At same time many officials plainly give evidence Chinese wish to keep on friendly terms with Ho Chi Minh. As indicated in EMSTEL 251, February 12, 1947, Chinese problem is to channel and in time capture or at least hold veto over power

elements in

-2- #971, May 29, 10 a.m.

elements in Indochina. Thus nationalism suits them, as does Ho Chi Minh with his galvanizing political force. Their expectation is that Indochinese political groups, with their rivalries and easy realignments, will provide their own equipoise, if the French do not have the final word. Chinese have no illusions as to Communist bent of many of Ho's followers and possibly Ho himself. They would expect to be in a position to intervene, with the Communist menace as a pretext, if a decisive Red coup took place; moreover, they would probably attempt to take some steps toward intervention immediately (especially in Tonkin) if a Communist coup took place in France (this threat has, of course, diminished recently). Finally, if the Chinese Government itself is further weakened or possibly driven southward, the Chinese may not impossibly feel that the US will not in its own interests allow such a strategic area to fall to Communism and will necessarily come to the rescue.

Department repeat Paris, Saigon and Hanoi, pouched Hong Kong.

STUART

NOTE: Relayed to Paris, Saigon and Hanoi at 11 a.m.  
May 29. F.M.H.



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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Control 3213  
Rec'd June 9, 1947  
2:47 p.m.

FROM: Paris  
TO: Secretary of State  
NO: 3063, June 9, 5 p.m.  
US URGENT.

Baeyens has informed Embassy that prevailing opinion in French Government circles is that Xuan Government has only dubious chance of success and that best indication its viability will be extent decrease in guerrilla activities during next month. States both Foreign Office and Overseas France would welcome changes in Provisional Government giving it a more representative character, as for example, replacement of Xuan by Dien. He added that Bao Dai who dislikes Xuan has repeatedly stated Provisional Government would remain in power only long enough to "secher les lars."

Commenting on Bay of Along agreement, which had previous approval of French Government (Saigon's 130, June 7, to Department, 34 to Paris), Baeyens stated referendum in Cochinchina was prerequisite to Assembly approval of change in status which would undoubtedly be vigorously opposed by Gaullists (my 3006, June 7). (Baeyens spent three hours with D'Argenlieu yesterday in discussion devoted primarily to means of protecting French interests in Cochinchina.) In addition to published text there is secret annex which Baeyens describes as "neither more nor less" than Bay of Along protocol of last December. Implementing arrangements called for in paragraph 3 of agreement (text in immediately following cable) must be "negotiated from scratch," according to Baeyens who envisages conference similar Dalat or Fontainebleau.

Bollaert returns to Paris about June 20 in order confer with Coste-Floret before latter's departure for Madagascar June 23. Baeyens does not believe

-2- #3063, June 9, 5 p.m., from Paris

he will return Indochina. Baeyens gives as principal reason other than personal for Bao Dai's forthcoming European visit his desire to remove himself from Far East during difficult period of establishment of Provisional Government and negotiations with France.

Department pass Saigon as 23.

CAFFERY

DIVISION OF  
COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS  
TELEGRAPH BRANCH

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Control 7557

Rec'd June 22, 1953  
7:03 a.m.

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FROM: Haining

TO: Secretary of State

RE: 1115 June 22, 4 p.m.

DE URGENT

Embassy officer had suggested especially to Vice Foreign Minister that inquiry regarding Communist affiliation Ho Chi Min (reference DESPATCH 379 June 15) might have arisen from desire of Foreign Minister to have fullest available information this subject for Legislative Yuan deliberations. Dr. Kuo said however that information was desired for general background purposes and not for specific decision.

Chinese desire to have our precise views on this point probably arisen from fact that, in view of our government's Communist policy, Chinese views would serve as a valuable indicator of our basic attitude and ultimate policy vis-a-vis Kuo Min government and this provides Chinese with a landmark for their own final policy there. Embassy sees no reason why such exact indication should be furnished Chinese (unless of course Department has own reasons for doing so) and it is suggested that a reply of general and tentative character would be adequate. Embassy officer has already suggested to Dr. Kuo that as compared to US the Chinese authorities have had at least as full, and in the past much fuller, opportunity to determine Ho's political views and affiliations, fact being cited that he worked closely with the Chinese military at Kwailin during latter part of war.

As regards query about Kuo Government's Foreign Office doubtless moved by anxiety that we would accord that regime a form of token recognition without prior consultation with

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-2- 1116 June 22, 4 p.m., from Kyauing.

Chinese. They have also probably heard reports which have been spread by some French official that we have given an approving nod to the French-Bao Dai attempt to form a government and wished to have notice of our intentions and if possible furnish any collateral data for recognition on our part. Incidentally British Embassy states Foreign Office has not queried in about British consular attendance at installation ceremony.

SCHWARTZ

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Department of State

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1. Depts info indicates that Ho Chi Minh is Communist.

His long and well-known record in Indochina during twenties and thirties, continuous support by French Communist newspaper Humanite since 1945, praises given him by Radio Moscow (which for past six months has been devoting increasing attention to Indochina) and fact he has been called "leading communist" by recent Russian publications as well as Daily Worker makes any other conclusion appear to be wishful thinking.

2. Dept has no evidence of direct link between Ho and Moscow but ~~conviction of Ho's~~ nor is it able evaluate amount pressure or guidance Moscow exerting. We have impression Ho must be given or is retaining large degree latitude. ~~Department has no evidence of direct link between Ho and Moscow but~~ ~~conviction of Ho's~~ ~~nor is it able evaluate amount pressure or guidance Moscow exerting.~~ ~~We have impression Ho must be given or is retaining large degree latitude.~~ ~~Department has no evidence of direct link between Ho and Moscow but~~ ~~conviction of Ho's~~ ~~nor is it able evaluate amount pressure or guidance Moscow exerting.~~ ~~We have impression Ho must be given or is retaining large degree latitude.~~ Dept considers that USSR accomplishing its aim ~~by (a) pinning down~~ large numbers of French troops, (b) exerting steady drain

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## Department of State

Washington

upon French economy thereby tending retard recovery and dissipate ECA assistance to France, and (c) denying to world generally surpluses which Indochina normally has available thus perpetuating conditions of disorder and shortages which favorable to growth communism. Furthermore, Ho seems quite capable of retaining and even strengthening his grip on Indochina with no outside assistance other than continuing procession of French puppet govts.

3. Dept. considers Nham govt has popular support comparable to that of Thinh govt in Cochinchina during latter half 1946.

4. Consul Hanoi was given no instructions re his attendance proclamation-Nham govt as Dept preferred rely his judgment this matter. Apparently he attended in response official invitation French authorities those sovereignty over Indochina we recognize. Emb. might observe to Fonoff that Chin Con Gen Saigon for past two years has been attending official ceremonies of govt autonomous republic Cochinchina and later Govt South Vietnam.

5. For uninfo only, Hanoi has reported that absence Chin representation Hanoi installation ceremonies was form of protest against French reestablishment Chinese congregations

a situation

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a situation in which Dept does not wish become involved  
this juncture.

Dept concurs that approach to Chinese should be governed  
by considerations outlined in several past references telegrams.  
While details above are for info only, Dept authorized in  
its discretion make general statement to Peking.

MARSHALL

(Handwritten signature)

(Handwritten initials)

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1948 JUL 2 PM 4 38

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OR CLEARANCE

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OUTGOING TELEGRAM

Charge Department

Department of State

Classification approved by:

Charge to

U.S. EMBASSY  
AMEMBASSY,

W.W. CONTROL

907

PARIS  
FOR WALLNER.

JUL 3 1948

Dept considering ways of implementing recommendations contained in final para Saigon's tel 180 Jun 30 to Dept, rptd Paris as 40, and it appears desirable that with Emb, you consult informally with French officials, particularly Bollaert, as to points 1 and 2 below. Please comment on these as well as remaining points.

1) Daridan has informally stated to Dept officer that in his opinion Assembly would not ~~not~~ have to ratify Baie d'Along agreement. He pointed out, however, that definite agreement covering points mentioned in para 3 that document would assumably have to be so ratified. Dept inclined believe French Govt would have to give, however, public evidence that it backed Bollaert's signature of agreement. Pls report current French thinking this question.

2) In event Daridan's interpretation correct, Dept believes that only measure which French Govt would have to submit for approval Assembly would be question of change of status Cochinchina to allow Quote union three kys Unquote to be achieved by Vicks as stated Jun 5 agreement. Would such

Woodruff Wallner, recently Associate Chief of the Division of Western European Affairs, was appointed First Secretary of the Embassy in France on July 21; he was on a visit to Paris.

Not printed.

Counselor of the French Embassy.

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Charge to

-2-

such move by Schuman Govt precipitate crisis? Is there any possibility that Communists might support such a measure or at least abstain from voting against it, as their line has consistently favored Quote Union of 3 kys Unquote?

3) How can approach to French best be made? In respect Baeyens' views (Embstel 3453 Jun 30) and rptd statements of Daridan that he does not believe Schuman govt would risk its political life to bring question before assembly, Dept believes that if desired results to be obtained, it must be done at highest level; i.e. Schuman, Bidault and Coste-Floret in spite latter's recent statement to Assembly (Embstel 3155 Jun 15) paralleled of course by high level approach to Bonnet In Washington.

4) Should approach, if made, be confined for present only to change in status Cochinchina? In this connection, what is best timing?

5) What concessions are judged necessary to give plan fair start?

Dept cognizant of fact that fighting in Indochina has now continued for almost three years; that we believe given

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✓ Robert Schuman, French Prime Minister, President of the French Council of Ministers (premier).  
✓ Not printed.

✓ Henri Fomnet, French Ambassador.



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No action

**CLEARANCE**

# OUTGOING TELEGRAM

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Department of State

Charge to

Washington

-4-

~~TOP SECRET~~

No action contemplated pending your return Washington.

Sent Paris as 2466, repeated Saigon as 108.

*Marshall*  
*(w w i)*

MARSHALL

RECEIVED DESK

1948-JUL-3 PM 12-44

-DCI-

CODE ROOM: Pl rpt above message in its entirety to Saigon as 108.

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7/2/48

FE

*TG*  
*EG*

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CF ARANCE

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1948 PACTOR

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
INCOMING TELEGRAM

FROM: Paris

Rec'd July 10, 1948  
6:26 a.m.

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 3621, July 9, 7 p.m.

FROM WALLNER

Dept may wish instruct Embassy inform Schuman Govt from top level down of US conviction that France is faced with alternatives of unequivocally and promptly approving principle Viet independence within French union and union three KYS or losing Indochina. While immediate Assembly debate seems only solution, Embassy should be given discretion in applying pressure to avoid charge giving tactical advice on political maneuvers or becoming identified with maneuvers that may imperil govt.

Ambassador concurs.

CAFFERY

MJF:MW



DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
OUTGOING TELEGRAM

AMEMBASSY,

July 14, 1948

PARIS.

2637

Dept approves line of action recommended last para EMBEL 3621 and wishes you proceed immediately to ascertain disposition Schuman Govt toward dealing with Indochina situation before Assembly adjournment. On basis your findings you should apply such persuasion and/or pressure as is best calculated produce desired result. In applying such persuasion and/or pressure you may in your discretion convey to Schuman Govt that once Baie d'Along agreement together with change in status Cochinchina approved, Dept would be disposed consider lending its support to extent publicly approving French Govt's action as forward looking step toward settlement of troubled situation Indochina and toward realization of aspirations Vietnamese people. It appears to Dept that above stated US approval would materially assist in strengthening hands of nationalists as opposed to communists in Indochina. Keep Dept closely informed.

MARSHALL

WE:WWallner  
SEA:CSReed

PREPARING OFFICE  
WILL INDICATE WHETHER

TELEGRAM SENT

5 PREPARING OFFICE WILL  
INDICATE CLEARLY THE  
CLASSIFICATION OF THE  
MESSAGE

Collect

Department of State

Charge Department: X

Washington

JUL 29 1948

AMEMBASSY,

PARIS.

2891

Please ascertain Bollaert's reaction to points made by Marie and Coste-Floret (EMBTEL 3934). They appear to be evading central issue of Cochinchina whose status as French Colony cannot be altered except by law of Assembly. Unless this status is definitively altered Baie d'Along agreement is in effect nullified. Saigon's 42 July 6 to Paris pertains.

Sent Paris as 2891 ; rptd Saigon as 123.

Marshall  
MARSHALL

1948  
JUL

- ✓ July 28, not printed.
- ✓ See telegram 155, ante, p.

~~Andre Marie, French Prime Minister - President of the French Council of Ministers (premier).~~

8516.00/7-2848

CS/1

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INCOMING TELEGRAM

Control 1771

Rec'd August 6, 1948  
12:43 a.m.

FROM: Paris

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 4034, August 5, 8 p.m.

Bollaert is of opinion (DEPTEL 2891, July 29) that President French Union may legally ratify Baie d'Along agreements but that change in status Cochinchina requires Assembly action. He maintains that he will not return to Saigon unless there is an Assembly debate on government's policy in Indochina and approval of Baie d'Along agreements and change in status Cochinchina.

Baeyens, Delavignette and Moutet share Bollaert's views. All consider that regardless of legal considerations, failure by Assembly to meet issue squarely will have practical effect of arousing such mistrust in Indochina as to nullify completely such progress as has been made.

In last night's session of Assembly, Frederic DuFong (PRL) introduced motion calling for discussion Indochina prior to adjournment for summer. Despite request by Ramadier that motion be withdrawn "as it deals with subject too delicate for government to undertake without prudence and without a full review of all aspects of the situation." Motion was carried by narrow vote 288 to 286. Date of debate will be set by conference of presidents.

Sent Department 4034, repeated Saigon 36.

CAFFERY

Governor-General Robert Delvignette was head of the political section of the French Ministry of Overseas Territories.

Marius Moutet was French Minister of Overseas Territories from January 26, 1946 to November 24, 1947.

Paul Ramadier was President of the French Council of Ministers in 1947.



OUTGOING TELEGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Washington

Control 6489

AMCONSUL

August 27, 1948

SAIGON, FRENCH INDOCHINA  
136

Bollaert's position as expressed in Paris tel 4384

Aug 24 to Dept (rpt Saigon as 48) unclear. Dept notes

(pg 7) Bollaert believes as QUOTE INNERQUOTE it

becomes apparent that Bao Dai has been able to achieve more by negotiations than Ho has or will be able to achieve by force of arms END INNERQUOTE there will be increasing tendency in ranks of non-Communist elements of Viet Minh to switch over. UNQUOTE It not clear how Bao Dai can show he has gained more from France by negotiation than Ho has or will gain by force arms when French not prepared to make any QUOTE irrevocable commitments UNQUOTE (pg 6) to Bao Dai or any provisional govt of which he may form part as High Commissioner states (pg 5) that such govt will remain provisional until peace restored sufficiently to permit popular referendum on permanent form govt.

Abbott might see Bollaert (who reportedly left Paris Aug 26 for Saigon) and attempt clarify ambiguities his statement to Embassy. At that time, you may wish point out that it difficult see how course action he proposes will in

absence

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OUTGOING TELEGRAM

Department of State

Washington

absence firm commitments by France ~~dispel~~ Vietnamese distrust of French, split off adherents of Ho, or materially reduce hostilities.

AS 136;  
Sent Saigon/repeated Paris as Airgram

Marshall

MARSHALL

~~CODE ROOM: Please send to Saigon as Dept's 136 and repeat to Paris as Dept's Airgram~~

FE:SEA:JEO Sullivan:v

SEA

FE

(Filtered File No. 01 Struggle)

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OUTGOING TELEGRAM

AMEMBASSY,

PARIS.

AUG 30 1948

3368

Dept concurs views Saigon's 188 Aug 28 similar those Deptel 136 Aug 27 to Saigon (rpt Paris as agam). Dept appreciates difficulties facing any French Govt taking decisive action vis-a-vis Indochina but can only see steadily deteriorating situation unless more positive approval Baie d'Along Agreement, enactment legislation or action permitting change Cochinchina status, and immediate commencement formal negotiations envisaged that Agreement. Dept believes nothing should be left undone which will strengthen truly nationalist groups Indochina and induce present supporters Viet Minh come to side that group. No such inducement possible unless that group can show concrete evidence French prepared implement promptly creation Vietnam as free state associated French Union and with all attributes free state. When you deem appropriate please point out to French Govt Dept's views regarding Indochina and repeat Dept's readiness publicly approve French Govt action along above lines which will assist bringing about solution of Indochina problem. In foregoing connection you might refer substance second para Deptel 3331 AUG 26.

MARSHALL



AMCONSUL

SEP 22 194

SAIGON, Indochina

149

For text statement in Dept spokesman Sept 16

response pertinent questions QTE Dept has watched closely rapid increase of Communist activity which has taken place in southeast Asia since early this year and has naturally taken this development into consideration in determining its course of action. Results of these activities in Burma, Malaya, Indochina and Indonesia have been reported by press as they occurred from time to time and need not be reviewed. However, little attention has been directed toward one major strategem employed by Communists in dependent areas of southeast Asia. To win support and allies in their drive for power, Communist leaders have consistently pretended to champion cause of local nationalists and have attempted to identify communism with nationalism in minds of people of area. This scheme worked well, at least until Cominform's denunciation of Yugoslav Communist leaders as being, among other things, guilty of nationalism. There is some evidence that sincere nationalist leaders in southeast Asia, originally deceived by this device, have now awakened to fact that, in Communist controlled states outside

over ESO. COE/5-2243

CS/A

photo 1-2-45

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~~Department of State~~

Washington **PLAIN**

(*Review*)  
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outside Soviet Union, nationalism to which they aspire  
is regarded as a high crime and grounds for ruthless in-  
terference in internal affairs of such states by inter-  
national Communist organizations UNQTE Sent Saigon/rptd  
Hanoi SINGAPORE ✓

*Lowell*  
*Lowell*  
*(11/15)*

CODE ROOM: Send Saigon as 149 RPT Hanoi as 45  
and Singapore as 151

✓ As 149.

✓ As 45 and 151.

Box 284

# POLICY STATEMENT

# INDOCHINA



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

September 27, 1948



Department of State Policy Statement on Indochina, September 27, 1946

#### A. OBJECTIVES

The immediate objective of US policy in Indochina is to assist in a solution of the present impasse which will be mutually satisfactory to the French and the Vietnamese peoples, which will result in the termination of the present hostilities, and which will be within the framework of US security.

Our long-term objectives are: (1) to eliminate so far as possible Communist influence in Indochina and to see installed a self-governing nationalist state which will be friendly to the US and which, commensurate with the capacity of the peoples involved, will be patterned upon our conception of a democratic state as opposed to the totalitarian state which would evolve inevitably from Communist domination; (2) to foster the association of the peoples of Indochina with the western powers, particularly with France with whose customs, language and laws they are familiar, to the end that those peoples will prefer freely to cooperate with the western powers culturally, economically and politically; (3) to raise the standard of living so that the peoples of Indochina will be less receptive to totalitarian influences and will have an incentive to work productively and thus contribute to a better balanced world economy; and (4) to prevent undue Chinese penetration and subsequent influence in Indochina so that the peoples of Indochina will not be hampered in their natural developments by the pressure of an alien people and alien interests.

#### B. POLICY ISSUES

To attain our immediate objective, we should continue to press the French to accommodate the basic aspirations of the Vietnamese: (1) unity of Cochinchina, Annam, and Tonkin, (2) complete internal autonomy, and (3) the right to choose freely regarding participation in the French Union. We have recognized French sovereignty over Indochina but have maintained that such recognition does not imply any commitment on our part to assist France to exert its authority over the Indochinese peoples. Since V-J day, the majority people of the area, the Vietnamese, have stubbornly resisted the reestablishment of French authority, a struggle in which we have tried to maintain insofar as possible a position of non-support of either party.

While the nationalist movement in Vietnam (Cochinchina, Annam, and Tonkin) is strong, and though the great majority of the Vietnamese are not fundamentally Communist, the most active element in the resistance of the local peoples to the French has been a Communist group headed by Ho Chi Minh.

This group has successfully extended its influence to include practically all armed forces now fighting the French, thus in effect capturing control of the nationalist movement.

The French on two occasions during 1946 attempted to resolve the problem by negotiation with the government established and dominated by Ho Chi Minh. The general agreements reached were not, however, successfully implemented and widescale fighting subsequently broke out. Since early in 1947, the French have employed about 115,000 troops in Indochina, with little result, since the countryside except in Laos and Cambodia remains under the firm control of the Ho Chi Minh government. A series of French-established puppet governments have tended to enhance the prestige of Ho's government and to call into question, on the part of the Vietnamese, the sincerity of French intentions to accord an independent status to Vietnam.

#### 1. POLITICAL

We have regarded these hostilities in a colonial area as detrimental not only to our own long-term interests which require as a minimum a stable Southeast Asia but also detrimental to the interests of France, since the hatred engendered by continuing hostilities may render impossible peaceful collaboration and cooperation of the French and the Vietnamese peoples. This hatred of the Vietnamese people toward the French is keeping alive anti-western feeling among oriental peoples, to the advantage of the USSR and the detriment of the US.

We have not urged the French to negotiate with Ho Chi Minh, even though he probably is now supported by a considerable majority of the Vietnamese people, because of his record as a Communist and the Communist background of many of the influential figures in and about his government.

Postwar French governments have never understood, or have chosen to underestimate, the strength of the nationalist movement with which they must deal in Indochina. It remains possible that the nationalist movement can be subverted from Communist control but this will require granting to a non-Communist group of nationalists at least the same concessions demanded by Ho Chi Minh. The failure of French governments to deal successfully with the Indochinese question has been due, in large measure, to the overwhelming internal issues facing France and the French Union, and to foreign policy considerations in Europe. These factors have combined with the slim parliamentary majorities of postwar governments in France to militate against the bold moves necessary to divert allegiance of the Vietnamese nationalists to non-Communist leadership.

In accord with our policy of regarding with favor the efforts of dependent peoples to attain their legitimate political aspirations, we have been anxious to see the French accord to the Vietnamese the largest possible degree of political and economic independence consistent with legitimate French interests. We have therefore declined to permit the export to the French in Indochina of arms and munitions for the prosecution of the war against the Vietnamese. This



policy has been limited in its effect as we have allowed the free export of arms to France, such exports thereby being available for re-shipment to Indochina or for releasing stocks from reserves to be forwarded to Indochina.

## 2. ECONOMIC

Indochina's trade with the United States before the war was relatively small as the greater part of its commerce was carried on with France and the French Empire duty free. Indochina now enjoys a limited customs autonomy, and the US should be able to compete more successfully with France.

American investment in Indochina has also been of minor importance in part at least because there has been no treaty basis for the protection of American interests there as activities in certain business lines are prohibited or can be conducted only with the consent of the French authorities.

Should a political solution satisfactory to the French and the Vietnamese be reached leading to the establishment of peaceful conditions within the area, the US should endeavor to have the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade made effective in Indochina and to make an arrangement which would afford protection for American enterprise there. The increased trade and investment in Indochina which might result from these measures would tend to raise the level of economic activity and standard of living.

We do not wish to press for these matters, nor to develop a long-term financial or economic policy in the area, until such time as a political solution, such as may terminate in large measure the present hostilities, has been achieved.

With respect to the important question of whether ECA assistance should be extended to the area, we have informed the French that because reconstruction and development of Indochina is impossible under the present conditions of warfare which pertain there, no direct ECA financing for Indochina will be forthcoming at present although French requirements will be readjusted accordingly. We have indicated informally our willingness to reconsider the question should conditions change.

As regards French claims for Japanese reparations on behalf of Indochina, we have taken the position in the Far Eastern Commission (FEC) that France should receive two percent of the total amount of reparations which may be determined to be available. While most FEC countries feel that the proposed share is too large, in view of the French wartime performance in Indochina, we have indicated a willingness to allow the French an additional one half of one percent. France presumably would also be eligible for a prorata share (or a portion to be determined by negotiation) of the 18 of our 28 percent of total reparations which we have proposed to make available to such FEC countries as accept our schedule for reparations distribution. This question remains unsettled. We have not allowed the French a portion of the advance transfers within the interim reparations program.

We have under consideration a French claim to gold valued at 37.5 million dollars earmarked for Japan in Indochina. The gold represents the settlement of certain trade balances between Indochina and Japan and of Japanese local



currency requirements during the period August 1940 to March 9, 1945. Since the earmarking of the gold transferred title to Indochina and since there are no general considerations of equity or public policy of a sufficiently compelling nature to justify withholding recognition of title thus transferred, the tentative position of the Department is that SCAP deliver the gold to Indochina unless an early FEC policy decision precludes such action.

### C. RELATIONS WITH OTHER STATES

The French, whose policy since the Japanese surrender has been a failure with regard to the Vietnamese, have made some progress in normalizing their relations with Cambodia and Laos. Both these Indochinese protectorates have now been formally admitted as "associated" states to the French Union. The peoples of both these protectorates have been allowed some degree of autonomy, which apparently satisfies them for the present. Unquestionably, however, the current *modi vivendi* will be altered by any French settlement with the Vietnamese which gives the latter more autonomy than now possessed by the Laotians and Cambodians.

The most recent French attempt to resolve the question resulted in the June 5 Baie d'Along Agreement between the French High Commissioner of Indochina and General Nguyen Van Xuan, head of the Provisional Central Government of Vietnam, and countersigned by the former Emperor of Annam, Bao Dai. In this agreement, France recognizes the independence of Vietnam, whose responsibility it will be to unite the three Vietnamese provinces of Indochina, with only such limits as are imposed by its membership in the French Union to which it freely declares its adherence. Further negotiations to fix relationships of France and Vietnam are provided by the agreement which must now be ratified by the French Assembly, particularly as it relates to a change in the status of Cochinchina, now a French colony, to permit its union with Annam and Tonkin.

As regards international conferences, the US, as it recognizes French sovereignty over Indochina, has upheld the right of France as a metropolitan power to submit the applications for associate membership in ECAFE of its dependent areas in Indochina.

French relations with the Siamese Government have improved since the November coup d'etat of Field Marshal Phibun. Phibun apparently has given assurances to the French that he has accepted the solution of the recent Siamese-Indochinese border dispute. He has furthermore taken limited measures designed to reduce the activity of Indochinese elements in Siam hostile to the French.

Chinese relations with Indochina, based upon a 1946 treaty which confers substantial benefits upon the Chinese in the peninsula, are largely determined by the needs and interests of the commercially and economically powerful Chinese overseas community in Indochina, numbering almost one million. On the surface, Chinese official relations with the French officials have been

correct although signs of tension develop from time to time. The Chinese have pressed the French to indemnify Chinese who have suffered property loss in Indochina's fighting. The Kuomintang has striven to maintain a tight control over the Chinese community through consular representation, while the French have endeavored to reestablish the situation of pre-war years wherein the French authorities successfully maintained a degree of control over Chinese within Indochina.

The Chinese, however, have also tried to protect the several hundred thousands of their fellowmen who live in territory not under French control. There have been contacts between Ho's agents and Chinese government officials which apparently resulted in Chinese tolerance of a munitions traffic from China to the benefit of the Ho government. French efforts to enlist Chinese support in Kwangsi and Kwangtung to suppress Chinese bandit and Communist bands which cross the Indochinese border have not been successful despite an agreement in principle.

An increasing Soviet interest in Indochina, as demonstrated by a step-up in radio broadcasts, was evidenced in the first half of 1948. The line taken by these broadcasts has been constantly to discredit the United States by attempting to identify it with "imperialistic France." There continues to be no known communication between the USSR and Vietnam, although evidence is accumulating that a radio liaison may have been established through the Tass agency in Shanghai.

#### D. POLICY EVALUATION

The objectives of US policy towards Indochina have not been realized. Three years after the termination of war a friendly ally, France, is fighting a desperate and apparently losing struggle in Indochina. The economic drain of this warfare on French recovery, while difficult to estimate, is unquestionably large. The Communist control in the nationalist movement has been increased during this period. US influence in Indochina and Southeast Asia has suffered as a result.

The objectives of US policy can only be attained by such French action as will satisfy the nationalist aspirations of the peoples of Indochina. We have repeatedly pointed out to the French the desirability of their giving such satisfaction and thus terminating the present open conflict. Our greatest difficulty in talking with the French and in stressing what should and what should not be done has been our inability to suggest any practicable solution of the Indochina problem, as we are all too well aware of the unpleasant fact that Communist Ho Chi Minh is the strongest and perhaps the ablest figure in Indochina and that any suggested solution which excludes him is an expedient of uncertain outcome. We are naturally hesitant to press the French too strongly or to become deeply involved so long as we are not in a position to suggest a solution or until we are prepared to accept the onus of intervention. The above considerations are further complicated by the fact that we have an im-



mediate interest in maintaining in power a friendly French government, to assist in the furtherance of our aims in Europe. This immediate and vital interest has in consequence taken precedence over active steps looking toward the realization of our objectives in Indochina.

We are prepared, however, to support the French in every way possible in the establishment of a truly nationalist government in Indochina which, by giving satisfaction to the aspirations of the peoples of Indochina, will serve as a rallying point for the nationalists and will weaken the Communist elements. By such support and by active participation in a peaceful and constructive solution in Indochina we stand to regain influence and prestige.

Some solution must be found which will strike a balance between the aspirations of the peoples of Indochina and the interests of the French. Solution by French military reconquest of Indochina is not desirable. Neither would the complete withdrawal of the French from Indochina effect a solution. The first alternative would delay indefinitely the attainment of our objectives, as we would share inevitably in the hatred engendered by an attempted military reconquest and the denial of aspirations for self-government. The second solution would be equally unfortunate as in all likelihood Indochina would then be taken over by the militant Communist group. At best, there might follow a transition period, marked by chaos and terroristic activities, creating a political vacuum into which the Chinese inevitably would be drawn or would push. The absence of stabilization in China will continue to have an important influence upon the objective of a permanent and peaceable solution in Indochina.

We have not been particularly successful in our information and education program in orienting the Vietnamese toward the western democracies and the US. The program has been hampered by the failure of the French to understand that such informational activities as we conduct in Indochina are not inimical to their own long-term interests and by administrative and financial considerations which have prevented the development to the maximum extent of contacts with the Vietnamese. An increased effort should be made to explain democratic institutions, especially American institutions and American policy, to the Indochinese by direct personal contact, by the distribution of information about the US, and the encouraging of educational exchange.



OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Air Mail

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL

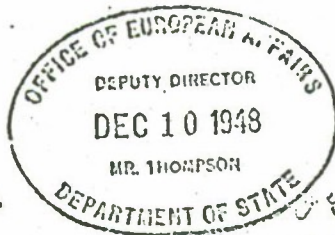
No. 195 118 NOV 30 PM 3 10 Saigon, Indochina, November 5, 1948

Subject: Soviet Policy in Southeast Asia.

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

WASHINGTON.



I have the honor to refer to the Department's secret circular instruction of October 13, 1948, entitled "Pattern of Soviet Policy in Far East and Southeast Asia" and to submit certain comments, as requested by the Department.

Soviet policy in Indochina appears to follow in general the lines described in the final section of the instruction under acknowledgement but with certain minor variation. In general it may be said that Indochina presents an ideal picture from the point of view of Moscow. A small group of Moscow and Chinese trained Communists has firm control of the strong and deep seated native Nationalism. A native government under Communist direction controls considerable areas of the country and maintains an army sufficiently strong to pin down large French forces. The country has been kept in turmoil since the end of the war, making it a serious drain on the military and economic resources of France instead of a source of wealth. From the point of view of Moscow, prospects are excellent that Ho Chi MINH will eventually force the withdrawal of the French and set up the first "New Democratic Republic" in Southeast Asia. At the same time Communist control has been concealed and identified with Nationalism so successfully as to confuse and delude public opinion in France and the United States and thus gain the support of large Socialist and liberal groups in those countries.

In recent months particular emphasis has been placed on economic sabotage. This has included burning of rice mills and rubber warehouses in Saigon, and attacks on communications of all types, including railroads, road convoys and barge transport. This has been so successful that the movement of paddy and rice to Saigon-Cholon has practically ceased in recent weeks. Curiously enough there have been no serious attacks on the particularly vulnerable petroleum depots in Saigon and Haiphong nor have the larger rubber plantations been seriously disturbed.

The Communist led Vietminh has not yet adopted the violent anti-American line followed by most Communist parties throughout the world, although there are many indications that this is only

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on the surface and that the standard anti-American line is being distributed in directives to party leaders. No evidence has yet turned up that Ho Chi Minh is receiving current directives either from Moscow, China, or the Soviet Legation in Bangkok. It may be assumed that Moscow feels that Ho and his lieutenants have had sufficient training and experience and are sufficiently loyal to be trusted to determine their day-to-day policy without supervision.

Another factor peculiar to Indochina is the apparent quiescence of Communist elements among the resident Chinese colony. Not only are these believed by the Sureté to be relatively few in number, but any plans they may have had to emulate their comrades in Malaya have undoubtedly been hampered by the Sureté which has been quietly rounding up and deporting their leaders for several months. It may also be that Moscow feels that anti-Chinese feeling is so strong in the Vietnam that active cooperation of Chinese Communists with the Vietminh would furnish too valuable a propaganda weapon to the French.

Respectfully yours,

  
George M. Abbott

~~American Consul General~~

✓  
~~Original and copies to Department~~  
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~~Copy to American Embassy, London~~  
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~~Abbott:egb:jr~~

Department of State

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

January 17, 1949  
6 p.m.

AMEMBASSY

PARIS

.145

Daridan has expressed to Dept same view contained penultimate para urtel 107 Jan 10 qualifying his remarks however with statement that he uninformed developments past ten days which might explain optimism Overseas France officials in urtel 106 Jan 10 re negotiations with Bao Dai.

While Dept desirous French coming to terms with Bao Dai or any truly nationalist group which has reasonable chance winning over preponderance of Vietnamese, we cannot at this time irretrevably [sic] commit US to support of native govt which by failing develop appeal among Vietnamese might become virtually puppet govt, separated from people and existing only by presence French military forces. Accordingly, Emb should make no additinal[sic] representations to French until and unless further instructed by Dept which does not believe it desirable go beyond position outlined Deptel 2637 July 14 its reftel 3621 July 9 from Paris and Embtel 5129 Sept 30.

Dept will inform Emb re possibility any common anti-Communist action Indochina (third para Embtel 107) after it has recd Brit views as Emb London reports Brit Fonoff has instructed Brit Emb Wash discuss matter with Dept.

LOVETT  
Acting



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SAIGON

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In forthcoming difficult period Dept desires you guard carefully against any action which might be seized upon as premature endorsement or de facto recognition by US of Bao Dai or any regime he may establish. FR giving evidence pessimism re viability Bao Dai solution and Dept desires retain as much freedom of action re IC as possible without in any manner giving impression we oppose or wish to hinder ex-Emperor. Dept has already discussed informally with FR Emb (as well as Brit Emb here) desirability appropriate FR officials issuing to consular corps invitations to attend all ceremonies involving Bao Dai (fifth para urtel 92 Mar 29).

Dept wishes you and Gibson continue reporting situation as closely and well as you have in past.

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*Le*

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FE:SEA:JLO'Sullivan:vw

4-29-49

Cleared with WE  
Mr. O'Shaughnessy

CLASSIFICATION

MAY 2 1949

Corrections made on this page MUST be made on all copies before delivery to Telegraph Branch.

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Saigon, Indochina, May 5, 1949.

Subject: Transmitting Additional Copy of Papers on Indochina for  
New Delhi Conference

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MAY 25

ACTION  
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NEA

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

WASHINGTON.

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SIR:

It was indicated at the New Delhi Foreign Service Conference that the Department would appreciate receiving any additional copies of the country papers that might be available. I accordingly have the honor to transmit one additional set on Indochina.

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There is also transmitted an additional supplement covering political developments in Indochina in February and March 1949 which was prepared by me while enroute to the Conference.

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As the Department is aware the Territorial Assembly discussed in this supplement was duly "elected" and voted on April 28, 1949, a resolution favoring unity of the Vietnam. However, the necessary action by the French Parliament to implement this recommendation has been unexpectedly delayed by the adjournment of the French Parliament until May 17. Instead of arriving in Saigon on April 28 as planned, Bao Dai landed April 28 by plane in Dalat where he will remain in a private capacity until the French Parliament has taken the expected action. The intervening period will be used by the Emperor to consult with political leaders, select his new government and make plans for the implementation of the March 8 Agreements. While the time will not be entirely wasted, it is nevertheless felt that the delay is extremely unfortunate. Not only has the psychological effect of Bao Dai's arrival in Saigon bringing unity and independence been largely dissipated, but the rapid progress of the Chinese Communists casts a lengthening shadow over Indochina, and every day of delay increases the difficulty of Bao Dai achieving his objectives.

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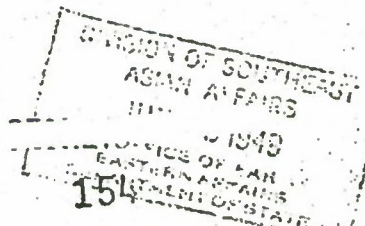
Respectfully yours,

George H. Abbott  
American Consul General

Enclosures:

1. Saigon Memo for New Delhi Conference

2. Annex No. 2 to Memo  
Multilith to Department  
Copy to Embassy, Paris  
Copy to Am Consulate, Hanoi  
310  
G. Abbott: jr



3516.00/5-549



Saigon, Indochina, March 31, 1949.

MEMORANDUM ON INDOCHINA FOR NEW DELHI FOREIGN SERVICE CONFERENCE

SECTION I. POLITICAL SECTION

Annex No. 2

Developments in February and March 1949

Feverish negotiations went on in Paris during the month of February and the early days of March. They were almost broken off when Prime Minister QUEMENEUR decided that for internal political reasons he could not live up to his earlier promise to present the proposed agreement to Parliament for ratification before Bao DAI's return. He felt that the only chance to obtain a favorable vote would be after the Emperor had returned and established a stable government which appeared to have a fair chance of winning the support of a majority of his people and restoring peace. Bao Dai finally accepted this but was adamant that the joining of Cochinchina to the Vietnam must be an accomplished fact before he arrived in Indochina.

Now difficulties arose over how this was to be accomplished. The quick and clear-cut way was to act under the paragraph of the French Constitution governing alienation or acquisition of French territory, and pass a law transferring the colony of Cochinchina to the state of Vietnam. However, it was argued, first that this would require a referendum of the people affected--impossible to hold under present conditions--and second, the proper method was to act under paragraph 75 permitting a change in status of parts of the French Union. This requires a vote by the French Assembly after a request from the Territorial Assembly. The constitutional experts argued that no proper assembly had ever been established in Cochinchina since the existing Assemblée de Sud Vietnam had been appointed and not elected. The Cabinet hurriedly drafted and submitted to the French Parliament a bill to set up a Territorial Assembly. This bill was jammed through the Assembly of the French Union, the French Assembly and the Council of the Republic in a week of all night debates. The Socialist Party's weakness for Ho Chi MINH and opposition to Bao Dai broke in the first debate and the government received heavy majorities from then on, only the Communists tenaciously opposing the bill.

The next steps are the "election" of the new assembly, a vote by it of a petition to change Cochinchina from a colony to an "Associated State" and to join the Vietnam, and then a new series of votes in the French Parliament to implement this. This must all be accomplished by April 25, the date set for the Emperor's return to Indochina. It is difficult to see how it can be done and a postponement of Bao Dai's arrival in Saigon can be anticipated.

It should



It should be mentioned that the necessity for this complicated (if it exists) has been little understood in Indochina by either French or Vietnamese and much additional mistrust and suspicion of French motives has been engendered. There has also been severe criticism of the make-up of the territorial assembly--the French claiming they will not be adequately represented (16 out of 64 members), and the Vietnamese protesting against any French representation at all.

When (and if) the above described process is completed, Bao Dai arrives in Saigon and the Auriol-Bao Dai agreement signed in Paris March 8, 1949, goes into effect, subject to future ratification. The text has not yet been published but a resume was given to the press after the exchange of letters and some additional details were revealed by the government during the debate in the Assembly and by High Commissioner PIGNON in a speech in Saigon on March 29.

It confirms the provisions of the Bai d'Along Agreement of June 5, 1948--unity and independence within the French Union, protection of French cultural and economic position and preference for French advisers and technicians--but apparently goes a considerable way in settling the many points left for future negotiation by that agreement. The Vietnam will have its own army under its own command except in time of war. France will receive military and naval bases with carefully defined rights of communication. The Vietnam will have its own diplomatic and consular service, but Vietnam missions will be restricted to three--Vatican, Siam and China. France will sponsor a demand for admission to UNO. French citizens will remain subject to French law. There will be an Indochinese custom's union and a joint currency tied to the franc. Economic and other matters affecting all of Indochina, including the thorny and important question of control of the Federal services--customs, railroads, postal service, aviation, highways, etc--are to be discussed at a conference of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam in May or June of this year.

It is understood that the agreement contains many provisions distinctly favorable to the Vietnam which the French government preferred not to reveal prior to the Assembly debates and the cantonal elections.

It is premature to discuss the prospects for success of the present plan before the text of the agreement has been carefully studied and until the arrangements for changing the status of Cochinchina have been successfully completed. (There are rumors circulating that the diehard colonialists in Saigon will attempt to rig the elections scheduled for April 10 with a hope to block the vote for autonomy or, more likely, the vote for union with the rest of the Vietnam in the hope of achieving their minimum objective of retaining an autonomous Cochinchina under French control.) Bao Dai must also form a government on his return with much more prestige and authority than the present NUAN regime.

However, if the full texts of the Agreement of March 8 and supplementary agreements for its implementation appear to contain a

reasonable

reasonable basis for satisfying the minimum demands of the Vietnamese nationalists, and if the other above-mentioned conditions are met, it is believed Bao Dai will have a fair chance to succeed in his plan to separate the non-Communist elements of the resistance from the Viet Minh. A loyal and liberal attitude by both sides during the critical period of change over from French to Vietnamese administration will be a vital factor in determining the chances of success.

This raises the question of the attitude of the United States government towards the plan. It has been intimated to the French that when an agreement was reached in Indochina which appeared to meet the minimum demands of the Vietnamese nationalists and to have a reasonable chance of succeeding, we would be prepared to indicate officially our approval and support, and to consider direct allocation of Marshall Plan funds to Indochina and perhaps other economic aid.

It is believed that this policy should be implemented at the earliest possible moment after the essential conditions mentioned in the previous paragraphs have been met. Naturally if Bao Dai fails after our support has been announced, the prestige of the United States suffers a serious blow. On the other hand, the lack of our support would be a heavy handicap which might well eliminate any chance of success. The alternatives to the Bao Dai solution are either continued costly colonial warfare or French withdrawal leaving a Communist-controlled government in a strategic area of Southeast Asia. Neither of these would appear to be to our interest.

Saigon, Indochina, February 12, 1949.

Subject: Transmitting Saigon Memoranda for New Delhi Conference

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,  
WASHINGTON.

SIR:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's circular telegram of January 12, 1949, 3:00 a.m., and to transmit herewith five copies of the memorandum prepared by this office for the New Delhi Regional Foreign Service Conference. Copies have been forwarded to other interested posts as instructed.

Respectfully yours,

George H. Abbott  
American Consul General

Enclosure:

Memorandum on Indochina for  
New Delhi Foreign Service  
Conference, dtd Feb. 12, 1949

Original and ozalid to Department  
Copies to: Ambassador, Rangoon

Ambassador, Cairo  
Ambassador, New Delhi  
Ambassador, Tehran  
Ambassador, Karachi  
Ambassador, Manila  
Ambassador, Bangkok  
American Consulate General, Colombo  
American Consulate General, Bombay  
American Consulate General, Calcutta (2)  
American Consulate General, Madras  
American Consulate General, Batavia  
American Consulate General, Lahore  
American Consulate General, Singapore  
American Consulate General, Canton  
USPOLAD, Tokyo

310

G:Abbott:W:Colbrook:H:Cunningham:DN:Coors/jr



Saigon, Indochina, February 12, 1949.

MEMORANDUM ON INDOCHINA FOR NEW DELHI FOREIGN SERVICE CONFERENCE

SECTION I. POLITICAL SITUATION

A. Internal Political Situation in the Vietnam

1. General Situation - Postwar developments in the Annamite provinces of Indochina, known as the Vietnam, are fundamentally similar to those in other parts of Asia in that they stem from a powerful upsurge of Nationalism. The Vietnam stands out from other regions in that Communism has gained control of the Nationalist movement and created a situation which is a classic example of the successful application of Communist strategy in a colonial area. A small Moscow and Chinese trained group has seized leadership and control of the strong and almost universally supported independence movement. The country has been kept in a state of strife and confusion for three years. One hundred thousand French troops are pinned down in Indochina and not available in Europe. The area is a serious drain on France's resources instead of a source of wealth and raw materials for France and the world. Finally there is a fair chance that the French may be driven out and the first Communist outpost in Southeast Asia established.

The French have belatedly come to a partial understanding of the situation with which they are faced and are endeavoring to erect a non-Communist autonomous government under the leadership of former Emperor Bao DAI. They hope to retain the Vietnam within the nebulous French Union and maintain French military and economic positions.

2. Background - To understand how the present situation arose a brief review of the history of the colony is necessary. Indochina came under European domination considerably later than Indonesia, India, or the Philippines; the French first occupying part of Cochinchina in 1864. The area of this colony was expanded while protectorates were established over the remaining parts of the peninsula during subsequent years. The administration tended to become more centralized and eventually evolved into a tightly knit political and economic federation in which the rights and powers of the Emperor of Annam, King of Cambodia, and Princes of Laos had practically disappeared. There was little autonomy or self government even at the local level and little place for natives in the administration except in minor or essentially honorary posts.

The French are justly proud of the task which they accomplished in building roads and railroads, developing ports, converting the swamps of the Cochinchinese deltas into rice lands, and developing the mineral resources of Tonkin. They also made considerable progress in implanting the French language and culture through schools and the church. (There are about two million native Catholics in the Vietnam, nearly 10% of the population) Nearly all educated Annamese speak some French.

The occupation and pacification of the country was not accomplished without numerous revolts which were put down with great severity. The Nationalist movement, however, was never completely suppressed and

developed particularly rapidly in the period between the two world wars. The Communists early became influential therein although never numerous. The Trotskyist faction was strong and at one time controlled the Indo-chinese Communist party.

The shattering defeat of France by Germany and the immediately following Japanese occupation of Indochina dealt a severe blow to French prestige with the natives, while the early Japanese victories in the Pacific extended this loss of face to all whites. Even though the Annamese hated the Japs, five years of anti-western propaganda left permanent effects on the minds of the people.

In the final months of the war when defeat was inevitable, Japanese leaders in Indochina deliberately created a situation which would make the return of the French difficult by setting up a native government and allowing arms to get into native hands. The allies had contributed to this situation by parachuting arms and supplies to the native underground fighting the Japanese. As in most occupied countries both in Asia and Europe, the Communists were one of the most active and best organized elements in this underground. Some months before the Japanese surrender Ho Chi MINH returned secretly to Indochina. He has had a long and prominent history as an Annamite revolutionary and a Comintern agent under a variety of aliases. For the Communists there was no question of his leadership; to others he was known as a lift long fighter for independence who had returned from exile to lead his people. He had around him a small group of able Communists trained as he was in Moscow, or veterans of the Chinese Communist movement. Following the then current popular front tactics, Ho organized a coalition of political parties known as the Viet Minh League and set up a government in which Communist control was at first concealed.

Thus when after some delay the Chinese arrived in Tonkin and the British in Saigon to disarm the Japanese troops, they found a native government established and in control.

A more detailed account of events from this point on will be found in the annex to this memorandum.

3. French Colonial Policy, Past and Present - While not always clear or consistent, French colonial policy before the war was generally one of assimilation. In its highest and simplest form, this was based on a complete absence of color or race prejudice and a belief that the mission of France was not to prepare her subject peoples for independence, but to convert them to French civilization, culture, and religion and prepare them to become French citizens and their homelands to become integral parts of France. (Martinique and Guadeloupe were examples of the complete application of this policy.)

This policy had been questioned even before the war and in 1943 General de Gaulle held a conference of colonial experts at Brazzaville to consider postwar colonial problems. At this conference was born the idea of the French Union which was to be a centralized colonial federation with varying degrees of local autonomy but with essential control remaining in Paris.



When France was liberated and the drafting of a new constitution was taken up, colonial policy played an important but confusing part. Few of the deputies to the two constituent assemblies knew much about colonial matters while the few "experts" were sharply divided. It must be remembered that the average Frenchman believes what he was taught in school - that France is the only colonial power that really understands the natives, that the latter are universally grateful for the benefits of French civilization and that any discontent is the work of a small minority of professional agitators.

Those who realized that the era of colonialism was past and that France must make fundamental changes in her policy if she were not to lose her empire could make little impression on the general apathy and ignorance. Even the Communists were hesitant about going too far against public opinion by advocating independence for the colonies, and were probably also doubtful about the wisdom of breaking up an empire which they expected shortly to control.

The result of all these factors was a constitution which was extremely vague, confused, and conflicting on colonial matters. It provides for three classes of overseas territories - (a) the overseas departments which are an integral part of France, (b) the overseas territories which have limited local autonomy, and (c) the Associated States. The latter category was created to take care of Morocco, Tunis, and the states of Indochina. No details were given as to their position in the Union except that it should be determined an "Act" or agreement with each Associated State.

The overseas territories (and, of course, the overseas departments) are represented in the Assembly and even more heavily in the Conseil de la Republique, the upper branch of the French Parliament. In addition, there is an Assembly of the French Union composed of half colonial and half metropolitan members which, however, has only consultative powers. Finally there is to be a Council of the French Union composed of a representative of each Associated State, the President of France, and certain cabinet members.

It was expected that the Vietnam would be the first Associated State and that the agreement with it would establish precedents for the entry of Morocco and Tunis. Unfortunately by the time the constitution was adopted and in operation, the situation had already gotten out of hand in Indochina. Ho Chi Minh was not willing to accept the extremely limited authority which the French insistence on control of defense, foreign affairs, and economic policy would leave him, and incited by the inept policy of Admiral d'ARGENLIEU and his subordinates, he made a surprise attack on December 19, 1946, which almost succeeded in overrunning the French forces in Tonkin and Annam and resulted in the murder of many innocent French civilians.

This attack strengthened the influence of the conservative and reactionary circles in France and Indochina and was followed by a desperate attempt to pacify the country by military means. While the control of most of the cities was regained, the countryside remained in the hands of Ho's forces and open fighting gradually shifted to

bitter



bitter and destructive guerrilla warfare. In this the French superiority in arms and equipment was balanced by the size of the country, the difficulty of the terrain, and the hostility of the great bulk of the population.

The realization that pacification of the country by force, even if possible, would be a long and costly process, and fear that world public opinion might force UNO or American intervention caused the French Government to shift policy in the spring of 1946 and replace Admiral d'Argenlieu by a civilian, M. Edile BOLLAERT, as High Commissioner. He was sent to Saigon with no precise instructions but with the hope that he could reach agreement with someone and stop the fighting.

In judging the situation on April 1, 1947, when he arrived in Indochina, developments in the French and international political situation since 1945 must be kept in mind. The most important was undoubtedly the growing split between the Western powers and Moscow. When the French first accepted to negotiate with Ho Chi Minh, his Communist background was of minor importance. France was an ally of Russia, and the French Communists were an important element in the coalition government in Paris. In the year that passed before Bollaert arrived on the scene, the international crisis had become clear, the Communists were no longer in the French Government, and the fact that the Viet Minh was Communist controlled became an important political factor. Thus Bollaert soon decided that the resumption of negotiations with Ho was impossible.

His decision to create a new political force around the ex-Emperor Bao Dai and the lengthy and confused negotiations which followed this are described in some detail in the annex to this memorandum. As it finally took form, what is commonly called the Bollaert-Bao Dai solution may be summarized as follows:

- a. It was necessary to recapture from the Communists control of the Vietnam Nationalist movements.
- b. To do this it was necessary to group together anti-Communist forces around some political figure with national prestige and influence. Bao Dai was selected - with considerable reluctance\* - since it was felt that traditional monarchism was still a force among the people, (and because it was felt that his French education and the fact that his wife is a devout Catholic would make him a more reasonable person to deal with).
- c. An agreement would be negotiated with Bao Dai granting the minimum Nationalist demands.
- d. Bao Dai would return to Hue and set up a government which would be a pole of attraction to those elements supporting Ho Chi Minh which were not Communists or sympathizers.

(probably

\* This reluctance was not only on the French side. Bao Dai has no enthusiasm to exchange the pleasures of the Riviera for a difficult and dangerous position in Hue.

(probably 80% of the total) and which were becoming increasingly fed up with the totalitarian methods and discipline of the Communist leaders of the Viet Minh and discouraged by months of hardship in the jungle.

e. Gradually Bao Dai's strength would increase and Ho's decline until the latter would either have to surrender, flee the country, or become a minor guerrilla leader.

It is obvious that the success of such a plan required granting sufficient authority and concessions to Bao Dai to enable him to establish a stable government in at least a restricted area and to convince native leaders that their essential demands had been met and that there was no longer any reason for continuing to fight. In this Bollaert failed, largely because of the political situation in France. The various "Third Force" governments were not only weak but sharply divided on colonial policy. They were particularly anxious not to give ammunition to the growing strength of de Gaulle's forces, always ready to exploit the average Frenchman's out-of-date views on colonial matters. Thus Bollaert was not even able to persuade the Government to request Assembly ratification of the extremely vague Baie d'Along Protocol of June 5, 1948. This fact was largely responsible for Bao Dai's decision not to return to Indochina which made further steps in the implementation of the plan impossible, even though a Provisional Central Government had been set up under General XUAN, former President of the Cochinchina Provisional Government.

Bollaert gave up in disgust and was replaced by M. Leon PIGNON, a young career colonial officer with much experience in Indochina.

4. Present Situation - M. Pignon, being a civil servant rather than a politician brought a fresh viewpoint to the situation, and appears to have made considerable progress towards a solution in his short period of office.

He has adopted the policy of his predecessor but has been successful in having it accepted as that of the French Government rather than as a personal policy of the High Commissioner. In this he was aided by a number of factors, the most important, of course, being recent developments in China. Even the most die-hard French political leader can realize that with the arrival of Chinese Communist forces on the Tonkin frontier which would assist or perhaps even join with Ho Chi Minh, the precarious French military position would become impossible. Moreover, a growing number of prominent Frenchmen in and out of the Government has in recent months advocated liberal concessions to Vietnam Nationalism. Even the Indochina resolution of the RPF (Gaullist) Congress last fall was surprisingly moderate, (although General de Gaulle himself has been less liberal).

Pignon reopened negotiations with Bao Dai in November and continued them in January after his return from a brief turn in Indochina. Little definite is known as to the exact status of these negotiations, but apparently concessions have been made on both sides. Bao Dai has agreed to return to Indochina if the French Assembly ratifies the Baie d'Along Agreement and changes the status of

Cochinchina



Cochinchina from a French colony to a part of the Associated State of Vietnam. A debate on these points is expected early in March. Bao Dai also wishes the prompt signing and ratification of a treaty covering the subjects reserved under the Baie d'Along Protocol, but it seems doubtful if this can be accomplished in the time available before his return. Disagreement still continues on certain points, the most important apparently being over separate diplomatic representation for the new state. The French are believed to have offered consulates in neighboring countries and Vietnam officers in certain French missions.

Opinions differ considerably as to the chances of the French Government to obtain the necessary parliamentary action. Undoubtedly opposition will be violent from both the extreme right and left wings while the Socialist Party will be seriously split. However, speculation at this time is pointless since the matter will presumably be settled by the time the conference opens at New Delhi.

A more pertinent question is - assuming Bao Dai returns - what chances has he to establish a stable government, split away the non-Communist followers of Ho Chi Minh, and eventually pacify the country? It is believed that the most important factor will be the nature of the French agreement with Bao Dai and the meaning which it gives to "independence within the French Union." If this independence is a sham with most real authority remaining in French hands, then Communist propaganda proclaiming him a puppet and a traitor will be vindicated.

A second factor is the manner in which the return is staged and the agreement is implemented. Because of the delay, inaction, and disunity on the part of the French in recent months, the Vietnam leaders and people have become cynical and distrustful. The popular enthusiasm which might have been aroused by the return of Bao Dai last June can no longer be expected. Furthermore, the French civilian population in Indochina will be sullenly hostile to any new regime while few officials can be counted on to offer real cooperation in the difficult transition period. The result of the French local elections in March will also be a factor since if they forecast a return of de Gaulle, doubt will be cast on the permanence of the agreement with Bao Dai.

Finally much will depend on Bao Dai's ability to resolve the rivalry and intrigue between Vietnam leaders and the regional jealousy and suspicion between the three provinces which are to form the Vietnam state. The Tonkinese are poor but energetic, intelligent and aggressive, the Annamese poor but cultured and proud, while the Cochinchinese feel that the other provinces are interested mainly in sharing the wealth of their region. Opposition to the French and Chinese is about the only thing that the leaders of the three provinces see eye to eye on. Cochinchinese separatism has been encouraged and supported by French business interests and less openly by many French officials.

#### B. Internal Situation in Cambodia and Laos

The people of Cambodia and Laos differ in race, religion, and temperament from the Vietnamese, and the problem of their relation with France is less difficult and acute. Cambodia has good reason to fear

the aggression



the aggression of both Siam and the <sup>Vietnam</sup> ~~Vietnam~~, and the French Protectorate has a literal meaning. Following the surrender of the Japanese a modus vivendi was signed in 1946 with the French granting local autonomy. Last year Cambodia and Laos became the first Associated States in the French Union, and recently the "independence" of Cambodia in the French Union was proclaimed. The negotiations for an agreement or treaty to determine the meaning of these terms has been delayed until the Vietnam problem is settled, with the French promising that Cambodia would receive at least the same concessions.

Cambodia has a new liberal constitution and has made some progress in adopting the forms of democracy. French officials are now called advisors to their Cambodian counterparts and exert their authority largely behind the scenes.

There has been increasing evidence of Cambodian impatience over the delay in fixing their final status, and a determination to win wider autonomy and sovereignty. M. Pignon as former Governor of Cambodia can be expected to be sympathetic to these demands.

Laos with a population of only one million, thinly scattered along the upper Mekong, is even less a political problem. After the war the French set up the Prince of Luang Prabang as King of Laos under a temporary agreement similar to that with Cambodia. The French administration in Laos is, however, much more direct and open. The region has been generally peaceful, but there have recently been rumors of concentration of "Free Laotians" in the Siamese provinces along the Mekong which may forecast raids into Indochinese territory. The objective of the Free Laotians is apparently an independent greater Laos including both the French province and territories inhabited by Laotians in Siam.

### C. International Relations.

1. United States - Post war relations between the United States and Indochina got off to a bad start with President Roosevelt's views on international trusteeship for strategic areas in the hands of powers unable to defend them, followed by the overenthusiastic activities of certain OSS agents in the period just before and after the Japanese surrender. The belief that the policy of the United States is to throw the French out of Indochina still persists in many circles both in Indochina and in France. We are also blamed for permitting the Chinese and English to occupy the northern and southern halves of the country to disarm Japanese troops. Our persistent refusal to supply equipment and arms for French military operations in Indochina is a sore subject with most French army officers. Another source of irritation has been the almost universal tendency of American correspondents visiting Indochina to write articles extremely critical of the French.

As conditions have deteriorated in Indochina (and in Europe) there has been more understanding of our policy and more desire to obtain our approval and assistance in implementing French plans, and at higher levels relations are relatively cordial.

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In recent

In recent weeks the FRENCH have actively supported proposals for four power cooperation in Southeast Asia to prevent the spread of Communism, and there has been much talk about the strategic importance of Indochina as a bastion against the southward spread of Chinese Communists.

As far as the Annamites are concerned, they were encouraged to believe that after the defeat of Japan we would assist them in obtaining independence. As it became apparent that our sympathies were tempered by strategic considerations in Europe, the popularity of the United States has diminished. Nevertheless, the prestige of the United States is still high, and even Ho Chi Minh has been careful to prevent any public anti-American propaganda.

2. China - The civilization of the Vietnam is essentially Chinese, and political and cultural ties have been close throughout the centuries. Nevertheless, there is little sympathy or natural liking between the two races largely because of the fear of future Chinese expansion and jealousy of the large Chinese minority which controls most of the business and trade of the country. The Chinese occupying forces in Tonkin and northern Annam left behind a bitter memory.

In the French-Chinese Treaty of 1946, France granted important concessions in China. These included the return of the French concession in Shanghai and the leased territory of Kiangchow, the sale of the Chinese portions of the Yunnan Railroad, a free port in Haiphong, and the continuation of free Chinese immigration into southern Indochina. The latter two provisions angered Vietnam leaders, and there have been repeated warnings that since they were not consulted in drafting the treaty, they did not consider themselves bound to honor it when they regained their independence. Attacks on Chinese immigration are frequent in the native press. The French authorities have been far from reluctant to heed the voice of public opinion, and are endeavoring to check immigration by strict enforcement of quarantine and other regulations.

The problem of Chinese Communists will be treated in a subsequent section.

3. Philippines - Political and economic relations between Indochina and the Philippine Republic are of surprisingly minor importance. There is not even a Philippine Consulate in Saigon. Vietnam political leaders are much interested in Philippine independence and the nature of the political, military, and economic agreements with the United States.

4. Siam - The cession of Cambodian and Laotian territory to Siam under Japanese pressure in 1941 left French-Siamese relations in a dangerous state when the war ended. After prolonged negotiations, Siam returned the provinces but has never officially accepted the decision of the conciliation commission.

With the advent of power of Marshal PHIBUN the French have made strenuous efforts to improve relations with Siam. Agreements were concluded last year for cooperation in preventing smuggling and

movements



movements of partisans across the frontier, and the present Siamese government is much less sympathetic towards the large group of Viet Minh refugees residing in Siam.

5. Malaya - With the outbreak of disorders in Malaya last year the French felt that they could expect greater sympathy and cooperation from the British authorities in Singapore. There have been a number of visits back and forth of military and civilian officials. The general impression is that the French are much more eager than the British.

6. Indonesia - The French have naturally sympathized and supported the Dutch in their difficulties in Indonesia. The recent police action has been enthusiastically approved, and the attitude of the United States and Australia bitterly attacked. There is undoubtedly an undercurrent of envy and jealousy over the contrast between Dutch military successes and French failures.

The Vietnam people naturally sympathize wholeheartedly with their Indonesian fellow sufferers, and the recent developments have been given as much prominence in the native press as censorship would permit. The developments in the Security Council have generally been greeted with disillusionment and a frequent reaction has been that the mistake of the Indonesians was to place too much trust in the United Nations and in the United States as the leading member of that organization. The New Delhi Conference created little excitement or enthusiasm, and the effect of Communist propaganda was clearly visible in certain articles denouncing Nehru as a member of the imperialist clan. Disappointment over the fact that Vietnam representatives were not invited and that Indochina was not discussed was undoubtedly a factor in the poor press received by the conference.

7. India - The considerable Indian minority, most of whom are shop keepers and money lenders, is the most important factor in relations between Indochina and India. The presence of a number of minor officials, chiefly police, from Pondichery, also tends to harm relations between the Vietnamese and Indians. Difficulties over the future of the French territories in India naturally gets much attention in the French press.

It is not believed that an independent Vietnam will be enthusiastic about accepting the leadership of India in Southeast Asia. An effort to play off the Indian against the Chinese can be expected.

#### D. Communism in Indochina

A brief description of the Communism in Indochina before and during the war and how it gained control of the Nationalist movement is included in Section A, Part 2.

Communist control is exercised along standard lines with top authority in the hands of a central committee known as the Tang Bo. All military units have political commissars and propaganda units exist at all levels. The secret police is well organized and active.

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No one knows how many Communists there are in Indochina, but the number of real party members is certainly small. The highest estimate is 20% of the troops fighting with Ho Chi Minh and this includes sympathizers. However, the number is undoubtedly growing, and at the same time non-Communist military units are being steadily infiltrated with secret agents. Units under Communist command are generally better armed. Thus the problem for the leader contemplating changing sides is not an easy one.

Another point on which definite information is lacking is the channel of communications with Moscow and the center of regional control. [It is probable that all of the available channels are used - overland from China, Burma, and Siam, and by sea from China, Hong Kong, and Singapore. It is also very possible that Moscow directives arrive via Franco.] Certainly satisfactory communications exist since Moscow publications of fairly recent date are frequently seized by the French. [Communist headquarters in South Asia are variously reported to be in Hong Kong, Bangkok, Singapore, Rangoon, and Calcutta. Hong Kong seems to be the most likely.]

One peculiar thing about Vietnam Communism is that there has been very little anti-American propaganda. It is obvious that this is not due to ignorance of the current party line. It apparently represents a hope on the part of Ho Chi Minh that he may still obtain American support for or at least acceptance of a Viet Minh government under his leadership. Evidence that this hope is diminishing is furnished in a regional party directive dated in November 1948 which stated that active anti-American propaganda should be conducted in party circles and by word of mouth among the people but should not yet appear on the radio, in the press, or in public speeches. [The main theme of this propaganda was to be that the United States is an imperialist power which aims to extend its domination over Indochina "in a manner even more cruel and ruthless than the French". An interesting item was that pro-American Annamites were to be denounced in anonymous letters to French officials which indicates that the Communists are aware of the similarity between their propaganda and the belief of certain French circles.]

The problem of Communism among the Chinese minority is one which has been given much attention by the French authorities, especially since the situation became critical in China. Up until now there has been surprising little direct cooperation between local Chinese Communists and the Viet Minh. There are very few Chinese among the insurgent troops, and the Chief of Surete states that no Chinese had ever been caught taking part in grenade throwing or other terrorist activities. However, the Chinese play an important part in communications and in smuggling arms and supplies. For some months now the French have been quietly rounding up and deporting small batches of known Communist leaders and the Surete feels they have the situation well in hand. In a recent conversation with the head of the Surete he, nevertheless, expressed some disquiet over the tendency of the local Chinese community to climb on the band wagon as Communist victories in China rolled up.

GMA/jr

SECRET

### Background Information

It is believed that a brief discussion of the background is essential to the understanding of the present situation in Indochina. The following paragraphs accordingly present a somewhat over-simplified version of events since 1945.

On March 9, 1945, the Japanese took over direct control of the administration of Indochina, disarmed French troops and interned most French officials and civilians. Emperor Bao Dai was retained in power and promised independence. When Japan surrendered, Japanese officials in Indochina permitted control to be seized by Annamese nationalists. Emperor Bao Dai abdicated on August 26, 1945, and Ho Chi MINH, a prominent Comintern leader, proclaimed the Vietnam Republic on September 2. The British, who moved into the southern region to disarm Japanese troops, refused to recognize the new republic and promptly turned over the administration to the French. There was some fighting in Saigon and continued guerrilla warfare throughout Cochinchina.

In the north the Chinese occupation forces recognized Ho's government and supported pro-Chinese elements in the dominant Viet Minh party coalition. After prolonged negotiations and considerable concessions on the part of the French (Shanghai, Yunnan Railroad, et cetera) the Chinese agreed to withdraw. On March 6, 1946, just before the Chinese withdrawal, a representative of the French High Commissioner signed a brief protocol with Ho Chi Minh, recognizing the Vietnam as a free country within the French Union and the Indochinese Federation with its own army, finances, and government. The status of Cochinchina was to be determined by a plebiscite. Details were to be worked out at a subsequent conference.

After unsuccessful negotiations at Dalat, Ho and a large delegation came to France early in June. The so-called Fontainebleau Conference lasted from July 5 to September 11. It broke down over the issues of the unity of Cochinchina with the rest of Annam, military relations, and Vietnam demands for a separate diplomatic service and control of customs, finance and economic matters. Just before leaving France, Ho signed a modus vivendi with Minister of Overseas France MOUTET which provided for stopping guerrilla fighting in southern Indochina, release of prisoners and hostages, and for the resumption of negotiations in January 1947.

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1. It should be recalled that the Fontainebleau Conference took place during the period of the second Constituent Assembly in which colonial policy was a crucial and bitter issue. Thus the French negotiators were hamstrung by lack of knowledge of what the new constitution would do about the French Union, while the Vietnam delegation was both doubtful of the authority of the French delegation and encouraged to be intransigent by violent speeches in the Assembly by colonial and Communist deputies. The Conference was thus foredoomed to failure.



When Ho returned to Hanoi, in October, he found extremists in his government, led by Communist Minister of War GIAP, had increased their influence during his nearly five months' absence. The measures for stopping the fighting in Cochinchina were never implemented and relations with the French deteriorated rapidly. A dispute over customs control in Haiphong, in November resulted in localized fighting, and on December 19, 1946, a carefully prepared surprise attack almost succeeded in overrunning French forces in Tonkin and Annam.

Fighting has been continuous since then. After a few weeks of real warfare in Hanoi and vicinity it deteriorated into bitter and costly guerrilla operations. With great difficulty France concentrated about 100,000 troops in Indochina armed chiefly with British and American lend lease equipment. This force, while sufficient to garrison the chief cities and maintain precarious communications between them, was not large enough to pacify the country. Civil and military officials in both France and Indochina have for some time admitted that this cannot be done without greatly increased forces which are not available.

When it became apparent that a military solution was not practicable the French returned to the idea of negotiations. Admiral d'ARGENLIEU was replaced as High Commissioner by M. BOLLACERT, a resistance leader and former career prefect. Partly because of the prejudice of Minister Moutet, who considered the attack of December 19 as a personal affront to him, and also because of growing anti-Communism in France, the French were reluctant to resume negotiations with Ho Chi Minh. In the absence of any other leader with a national following, the French turned to the ex-Emperor Bao Dai who was living in exile in Hong Kong. During the summer of 1947 fevered and confused negotiations succeeded in collecting a motley group of parties, movements and individuals willing to support Bao Dai. The nucleus was traditional monarchists from Annam and Tonkin. To this was joined certain native Catholic elements in Tonkin, the Cao Daiist and Hoa Hao religious sects in Cochinchina, certain anti-Communist nationalists, and various other minor groups with mixed motives.

By September 1947, the French felt prepared to open a combined diplomatic and military offensive. Bollacert was to make an important policy speech outlining the conditions for a settlement, while a limited military offensive in Tonkin would weaken Ho Chi Minh and encourage waverers to rally to Bao Dai. Unfortunately, the text of Bollacert's speech became a political football in France and as delivered was so watered down that it made a poor impression in native circles. The only new concession offered was union of the three Annamite provinces.

Bao Dai, after considerable urging, met with Bollacert on a French cruiser in the Baie d'Along on December 6 and 7, 1947, and signed a secret protocol which recognized the independence and unity of the Vietnam within the French Union, provided for the protection of French economic interests, and for priority for French in choosing advisers



and technicians, but left to later negotiations the detailed solution of diplomatic, military, economic, financial, and technical matters. (This agreement was, except for two unimportant words, exactly the same as the one signed on June 5, 1948, by Bollaert, Xuan, and Bao Dai.) Bollaert is understood to have agreed he would not deal with Ho. It was arranged that the two would meet again in February to make final arrangements for the return of Bao Dai to Indochina.

Bollaert returned to France to explain his plans to his government and obtain its approval. Bao Dai unexpectedly followed Bollaert, going to Switzerland where he had a meeting with M. Bollaert in January. The High Commissioner returned to Indochina on January 26 to prepare for the meeting with Bao Dai scheduled for February. The latter, however, went to France and was received by a number of high government officials. This infuriated Bollaert, who threatened to resign and was only placated by an official statement that negotiations with Bao Dai would be exclusively through him.

Events from this point on were confused. Obviously Bao Dai had reconsidered his reluctant agreement to return to Annam and felt that additional concessions and guarantees were essential if he were to gain the support of sufficient Nationalist elements to insure stability for his new government. In addition, his stay in France had opened his eyes to the unstable position of the French government and the possibility of a return to power of de GAULLE.

Bao Dai did not return to Hong Kong until March 14, 1948. The following weeks were marked by much coming and going between Saigon and Hong Kong of French and Vietnam representatives, and continually changing rumors of the status of the negotiations. Apparently despairing of persuading Bao Dai to return in the near future, Bollaert agreed to set up a Provisional Central Vietnam Government which would prepare the way for the Emperor, who agreed to give his moral backing to the new regime.

The new government was headed by General Xuan, then President of the Cochinchinese Government. Xuan, while an Annamite by birth, is a general in the French Army, a French citizen, and married to a French woman. He was, of course, promptly branded as a French puppet (which is not believed to be true). Xuan had great difficulty in persuading persons of ability and influence to join his government, even with the backing of Bao Dai, and the team he collected was very weak, particularly as regards representatives from Tonkin.

On June 5, 1948, Bollaert met with Xuan and Bao Dai, again on a cruiser in the Baie d'Along, and a new agreement was signed which was almost exactly the same as the first one. The text was promptly made public in contrast to the first protocol. The ex-Emperor left for Switzerland the same day while M. Bollaert returned to France shortly afterwards. President Xuan proclaimed his new government in Hanoi.

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The High Commissioner apparently believed that he would obtain prompt ratification of his agreement by the French Cabinet and Assembly, following which, Bao Dai would return to Indochina, and the negotiations for the supplementary agreements could then begin. Unfortunately, he returned to Paris at a particularly difficult moment. The Schumann Government was faced with growing internal dissension and opposition within the Assembly. The Socialist Party Conference had revealed a swing to the left and voted a resolution favoring negotiations with Ho Chi Minh. Colonialist and conservative groups in Indochina and France began an active campaign against the Baie d'Along agreement as the first step in throwing away the empire. In the circumstances, the government was naturally reluctant to take up a problem which might well result in its overthrow by the Assembly and which appeared less urgent than other serious internal and international problems. After the Schumann Cabinet finally fell, the shortlived Mario Cabinet was even less eager to face a debate on Indochina.

When the long scheduled interpolation on Indochina finally came up on the agenda, the Prime Minister asked that the debate be postponed indefinitely, but indicated the government's approval of M. Bollaert's policy and the Baie d'Along protocol and announced that a vote in favor of adjournment would be considered as approving this policy. A substantial majority was obtained after a brief debate on the adjournment motion which indicated general approval of the Baie d'Along protocol by all parties except the Communists, but considerable differences of opinion as to its interpretation and methods of application. The Socialists in particular were embarrassed by the party directive mentioned above.

M. Bollaert returned to Indochina breathing optimism and professing to be completely satisfied with the Assembly's action and convinced that Bao Dai would return, and the implementation of the Baie d'Along protocol could proceed immediately. This optimistic facade crumbled quickly. Bao Dai lost no time in making it clear that he was not returning until a formal agreement had been signed and ratified by the French Government, not only covering the principles of the Baie d'Along protocol, but the reserved subjects left for future negotiation. Private and public statements of Xuan and his ministers and articles in the native press showed that they were in no way satisfied with the oblique handling of the matter by the French Government. The local colonialist press proclaimed a defeat for Bollaert and took pains to point out that the whole situation in Indochina was illegal and unconstitutional and that, in particular, no change could take place in the political status of Cochinchina without formal Assembly action, since Cochinchina, in contrast to Tonkin and Annam, is a French colony and French soil.

M. Bollaert soon let it be known that he would not request a further extension of his term of office, which expired September 30. The reason given was his need to return to France to rebuild his political fences for the coming elections for the Conseil de la Republique. Actually, it was clear that for reasons largely beyond his control,



his plans for a prompt solution of the Indochinese problem had failed and that much time and effort still remained to be expended.

The appointment of M. PIGNON as successor to M. Bollaert came as a great surprise since his name had not even been mentioned among the numerous candidates for the position (The two most talked of were General MAST, former Governor of Tunis, and General CATROUX, a former Governor of Indochina and recently French Ambassador to Moscow). Pignon is a career colonial official just over 40 years of age who has spent most of his service in Indochina. In 1948 he had been Commissaire de la Republique (provincial governor) for Cambodia when he was called to Paris for a responsible job in the Ministry of Overseas France. His appointment is generally considered as indicating the intention of the Cabinet to keep closer control over developments in Indochina.

The new High Commissioner spent the first weeks after his appointment in Paris, arrived in Saigon on November 21, and returned to Paris on December 11, 1948. His brief stay in Indochina was chiefly occupied in bolstering up the tottering Xuan Government. A more detailed account of his activities since assuming office will be found in the main section of this paper.

GMA/jr



MEMORANDUM ON INDOCHINA FOR NEW DELHI FOREIGN SERVICE CONFERENCE

SECTION II. UNITED STATES INFORMATION SERVICE

A. Need for USIS in Indochina

No American news service reaches Indochina. UP service to Indochina ceased in December 1948 because it could not meet expenses. AP is negotiating with the Bureau of Press and Information of the French High Commissariat for Indochina, but even if AP succeeds in selling its service to the Bureau, that organization will translate, select and edit whatever AP material it sees fit to pass on to the public through press and radio.

Agence France Presse service is distributed in Indochina under the Bureau's supervision. The Bureau naturally concentrates on presenting the French point of view and on excluding all news which might disturb the population or be inimical to French policy. News of the United States and of the United Nations reaches the public here badly truncated or not at all.

Against this background, USIS Saigon should be disseminating the full facts on United States policy. Here is an illustration of this mission. The French in Indochina have admired the Dutch "police action" of last December in Indonesia. The Indochinese press, lacking adequate news sources, at first misinterpreted beyond recognition the United States' attitude toward that action. If the Department's wireless bulletin were being received here, it would have been possible to provide the papers and Radio Saigon promptly with the full texts of the Department's January releases on Indonesia and of Mr. JESSUP's statements of United States policy. Though delayed, this material did reach here by pouch from Bangkok and has been brought to the attention of friendly journalists. As will be explained below, efforts are being made to begin copying the wireless bulletin in Saigon. The British Consulate General distributes a small daily wireless bulletin mimeographed in English on both sides of a single legal size sheet.

American and other English language books are not on sale in Indochina. There has been very little English taught here. Nevertheless, the public, whether Vietnamese, French, or Chinese, is acquiring some English and is eager to learn about the United States and its culture and achievements. The large, steady attendance at the Reading Room is evidence that USIS' stock of books and publications fills a need and at the same time contributes to American prestige.

B. Current Activities

Since USIS Saigon first opened a temporary Reading Room on August 26, 1946, there have been periods of inactivity imposed by problems of space and personnel. The present Reading Room opened its doors on August 13, 1947. It has a popular corner location on the

main

main business street of Saigon. The chairs are comfortable, the shelves attractive, and the Vietnamese attendants are efficient and courteous. The stock of books is modest (just over 1,000), but interesting new acquisitions are flowing in. Daily attendance of readers and visitors exceeds 200 (average 5,000 per month) and is in the ratio of more than 3 Asiatics to 1 European. There is also a British Reading Room in Saigon, but it suffers from a very inconvenient location and lacks staff. Attendance at the British Reading Room is only a small fraction of that enjoyed by USIS.

From March 7, 1948, when Mrs. Jeanne SWENSE, a public affairs assistant temporarily in charge of USIS, Saigon, was ambushed and killed, until the arrival of the present Information Officer on November 12 there was no American personnel attached to USIS Saigon. However, the Consul General instructed a vice consul, Mr. Dallas M. COOKS, to give such attention to the conduct of a "holding operation" at USIS as would be consistent with the performance of his other duties. The previous American director of USIS Saigon resigned on January 15, 1948. The present director arrived one year later, on January 13, 1949.

Thanks to the effective work of Mr. Cooks and of the small and devoted Vietnamese staff, the two American officers now at USIS have taken over a going concern which provides, in addition to the Reading Room, weekly film showings in a hall loaned by the Bureau of Press and Information, a system for lending films and projectors to schools and organizations, the distribution of American periodicals to a carefully selected list, the gift distribution of wartime stocks of paper-bound G.I. books and Army textbooks, and a little cultural exchange work. The periodicals and wartime books are mailed or shipped to persons and institutions in many parts of Indochina. USIS has reason to believe that some of this material filters into areas under Viet Minh (rebel) control.

Plans to monitor and distribute the wireless bulletin have gone on for a long time and are now being pushed. The present stumbling block is the lack of office space to accommodate the wireless equipment and operator and the employees and machines to take care of duplication, distribution, and eventual translation of the bulletin. Office space is extremely scarce in Saigon, but USIS is leaving no stone unturned in search of it.

Small bulk subscriptions to Time, Newsweek, and Life (25, 27 and 19 copies respectively) are received here (Pacific editions) and distributed by USIS to a selected list including friendly journalists. The Information Officer distributes news items and photos received by air from the Department and endeavors to place them where they will be appreciated and published. As this press program has just been revived (lack of personnel has caused its suspension), it is too early to measure its effectiveness. Several local papers, Vietnamese, French and Chinese language, are printing USIS material, chiefly photos and plastic cuts. They pirate some material from Time and Newsweek.

#### C. Particular



### C. Particular Problems Encountered in Indochina

The civil war in Indochina and the fact that Saigon for all its charm is a besieged city have a direct bearing on the day to day activities of USIS. Among Frenchmen in Indochina the belief persists that the United States wishes for economic reasons to supplant French power and influence here. These factors have in the past led to official French protests against one or another activity of USIS and still condition its functioning. Two plain clothes men habitually loiter near the entrance to the Reading Room. Aside from the question of whether anyone is actually molested for attending the American Reading Room, the presence of these detectives may cause some interested persons to stay away.

The showing and lending of films is encumbered with controls and red tape. To be shown at all a film must have been granted a "visa" by the Bureau of Press and Information. Anyone wishing to borrow films for showings must have the specific approval of the Bureau. For instance, an owner of rubber plantations requests USIS in writing to place his plantations on the list for regular film loans. He states that the audiences will consist of Vietnamese employees, French supervisors, local guards, and French soldiers. USIS writes to the Bureau, encloses a copy of the letter from the plantation owner, and asks approval. This is granted promptly, and USIS is then free to circulate films, each of which must have been "visaed" to the plantations in question. Although the precise effect cannot be estimated, these formalities must act as a brake on applications to borrow USIS films.

The Director of the Bureau of Press and Information has stated informally that application for permission to issue the wireless bulletin must be made to him in writing. He added that he would immediately grant approval. Nevertheless, this required procedure illustrates the close control exercised over printed matter. The French authorities will certainly protest against and endeavor to stop any USIS activities to which they take objection. Expansion of the program here or additions to the American staff of USIS must be carried out with circumspection in order to avoid suspicion and obstruction.

The shortage of office space is accompanied by a scarcity of living accommodations. The unsolved and harassing housing problems of the two American couples are evidence that some time must elapse before even a third American is assigned to USIS Saigon. On the other hand, additional local personnel will be employed as soon as additional office space is obtained. This prospective increase in local staff will, in addition to producing the wireless bulletin, enable USIS to expand the distribution of photo exhibits and to set up a lending library of recorded music.

The present possibilities of exchange of persons working here are severely limited. A few students have applied for scholarships at American universities, and USIS has forwarded their applications. Certain adverse factors exist independently of the civil war and of

the impossibility



the impossibility of obtaining dollar exchange. Very few Vietnamese are sufficiently wealthy under any circumstances to send their children half way around the world to college. The implementation of the Fulbright agreement with France is being worked out in Paris. It seems probable that this implementation will place Indochinese applicants in direct competition with those in France. In that case there is not likely to be any political discrimination against Vietnamese or other Indochinese applicants. They will, however, constitute but a small fraction of those applying in French territory and will rarely possess accomplishments permitting them to meet the competition of students from France itself. It will be recalled that the Fulbright program is designed for graduate students.

Hanoi is under more intense siege than Saigon, and has experienced more destruction. A very modest USIS program, limited primarily to magazines and some film distribution, is about to be launched by the Consulate there. The possibility of expanding this program will be subject to periodic review. Present plans are for the Consul and Vice Consul to devote some of their time to USIS activities, assisted by one or two Vietnamese employed at USIS expense. The possibility of opening a small reading room at Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, is being considered.

Despite the accelerated tempo of events in China, Indonesia, Malaya, and Burma, the situation in the French-held areas of Indochina has been relatively static for some time past. This report has been written in the light of this static situation. Current French negotiations with ex-Emperor Bao Dai of Annam may lead to his early return to Vietnam with a trend toward more peaceful conditions in Indochina which would permit expanded USIS activities. The single factor of improved transportation facilities would be an immense advantage. If, however, conditions become more unsettled, USIS will soon be adversely affected.

HFC/jr

Lt. Col. L. Hunter  
American Embassy  
Bangkok

American Consulate General,

Saigon, Indochina, February 12, 1949.

MEMORANDUM ON INDOCHINA FOR NEW DELHI FOREIGN SERVICE CONFERENCE

SECTION III. MILITARY SITUATION IN INDOCHINA

Summary

The war in Indochina, now in its third year, has continued its indecisive course during the past six months. The usual fall and winter campaigns, more limited in scope than last year, resulted in the reoccupation of abandoned towns and the usual capture of stocks of arms and explosives, without any decisive result. The truism that "there is no military solution" for Indochina is more pertinent now than ever, with 100,000 French troops, over 80% Indochinese, Senegalese, Foreign Legion or other mercenaries, hardly more than adequate to hold the present very limited areas of control. In this stalemate, large scale Chinese Communist intervention or the complete breakdown of present political negotiations leading to self-government would have a serious, if not disastrous, effect on the present French military position.

THE ARMY

History

Since early in 1946 a succession of French generals (including Le Clerc and Valluy, two of the ablest) have tried their hand at pacifying Indochina. A high point in the series of campaigns was reached in November 1947, with a successful fall campaign in Tonkin that dealt a severe and unexpected blow to the Viet Minh. The French were unable to consolidate their advantage, however, and by December 1947 were being counter-attacked all along the line, finally being forced to withdraw virtually to their original positions.

In spite of subsequent raids or combined operations into Viet Minh held territory, the initiative has remained with the Ho Government, together with control of most of the country.

Current Situation - Tonkin

The past few months have seen two operations in Tonkin. The first, "Operation Ondine", was designed to cut off the mountainous "northern-redoubt" from the rich rice producing delta. It involved a five battalion, combined paratroop, land and river operation to seize Son Tay, Vietri and the line Son Tay - Hanoi. No resistance was met in the initial stages and no Viet stores were found. Harassing counter-attacks along the perimeter of this 20 mile salient make it already appear doubtful if it can be held during the rainy season.

The second Tonkin operation began on 8 December and had the line Nam Dinh - Phu Ly - Hadong as its objective, together with a "clean up" of the strongest center of resistance and arms supply in the Delta. Paratroops, infantry and Marines were used, heavy resistance met, and



considerable stocks of munitions and supplies were seized. Since the Nam Dinh - Phu Ly - Hoihong line is entirely surrounded by Viet Minh held area and had to be supplied by air or river-boat, French withdrew from the area when objectives had been reached, operation ending 21 January.

#### Central and South Annam

This relatively tranquil sector erupted on 16 January 1949 with a large scale Viet Minh attack on the Tourane - Hue railroad resulting in destruction of the train and capture of the manager of the railroad. Previously only routine French clean-up operations have been noted during the past six months in the narrow, hundred-mile-long coastal strip held by French forces in central Annam. As in South Annam, an attenuated chain of small forts and blockhouses, manned by second-line troops, is subject to intermittent and admittedly nerve-wracking attacks. This attrition, plus miserable living and sanitary conditions has reduced morale and initiative in both Central and South Annam sharply.

#### Cochinchina

Three fairly able generals, LE CLERC, NYO, and Boyer DE LA TOUR DU MOULIN, have tried their hand at pacifying Cochinchina, but in almost three years the situation has remained virtually unchanged. The French hold all the large towns and a small network of roads radiating from Saigon to the north, west and northwest quite firmly, although attacks even within this limited framework are frequent and sometimes severe. Beyond it, in spite of massive sweeps and encirclements, para-troop and amphibious operations, the countryside remains in Viet Minh control. The "Plaine des Jones" area west and south of Saigon and the whole rich, rice-growing Ca Mau peninsula remain particularly strong centers of Viet resistance. The latest reported French plan for the Ca Mau peninsula is to permit no rice to be exported from it, in spite of world rice shortages, so solidly is its economy controlled by the Viet Minh.

#### Cambodia and Laos

These large, sparsely-inhabited, deficit areas use up large numbers of French and Indochinese garrison troops to protect towns and communications from an insignificant Independence movement which draws most of its strength from Siam and the Viet Minh. Important operations on the part of either adversary are very rare, although large scale Free Laos operations are reported planned for late February.

#### Troops

Current estimates give a total of 100,000 French troops for all of Indochina. Of these, almost 50% are believed to be Indochinese natives, under French officers and non-coms. Total white French troops, including cadres, are not believed to exceed 20% of the total or about 20,000. 12,000 Foreign Legion and a mixture of Senegalese, Moroccans, Algerians, Tunisians, together with a few Pondichery Indians, make up the balance. A regiment of French Marines also serve as infantry combat troops with the French ground forces.



Native anti-Viet Minh movements such as Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, Partisans, etc. have been virtually written off as an asset, and in the case of the latter two groups have become an admitted liability.

Morale and discipline in all combat units visited during past months showed a sharp decline over the past year, particularly among paratroop units. Widespread atrocities have been reported by American and British sources in the North; health and sanitary conditions in the field were observed to be very bad; and there is a widespread lack of confidence in both the French government at home and French generalship in Indochina among officers and superior non-coms. Feeling the general hopelessness of the military situation, many of the ablest young officers are seeking staff rather than combat duty, and only the most recently arrived French troops show much combat enthusiasm or smartness of discipline. In this connection, Viet Minh propaganda makes much of an alleged recent proclamation by Andre MARIE, French Minister of Justice, offering French convicts a chance to "redeem" themselves by joining the Colonial Army to fight in Indochina.

The pay of officers and superior non-coms, however, is good to excellent, particularly in comparison with metropolitan France; professional advancement and decorations frequent; and these factors have inhibited widespread resignations or desertions.

#### Generalship

The present two top generals in Indochina (BLAIZOT and ALLESANDRI) are thought by French officers to be decidedly second rate, although served by a first rate General Staff. Area commands (KOCH in Tonkin, LE BRIS in Annam, DE LA TOUR in Cochinchina) are little more than autonomous sector commands. All large scale plans and decisions are made in Saigon by Allesandri and staff, with some interference by the High Commissariat, particularly on the political implications of military moves.

#### The Navy

With a single carrier, a cruiser, a dozen colonial sloops, three LST's, 16 minesweepers, and a variety of small landing craft at its disposition, the Naval Command in Indochina is a minor military factor. Its functions are: river and coastal patrol (anti-arms and rice smuggling); transport and support of troops in amphibious operations, and protection of river convoys. A regiment of Marines (Fusiliers - Marins) while officered by the Navy is under Army operational command. They are recognized as the best combat infantry in Indochina at present.

#### The Air Force

Some 36 out-dated German Junker transports (JU52's) used for paratroop operations, are the backbone of the French Air Force in Indochina. Additional planes are old Spitfires and C-47's, plus light observation and personnel planes such as Piper Cubs. Besides transport of paratroops, the mission of the Air Force is the bombing and strafing of villages not in French control, support of ground troops and personnel transport.

As in

As in the Navy, promotions and decorations are slow, and morale and maintenance have both fallen off sharply in the past months. Pilots particularly resent lack of ground facilities, and various safety devices which those trained in the U.S. (over 50%) there learned to regard as indispensables.

### The Viet Minh

Opposed to the French forces are about 75,000 Vietnamese troops of various political complexions, largely under Communist dominated leadership. There is considerable French-furnished evidence of Communist political commissars and indoctrination extending down to company strength levels. It is certain that the disciplined Communist element has been the largest factor in maintaining the vigor and cohesiveness of the resistance. In this, they have been greatly helped by French indecision and bad faith, and the terrorism of French troops.

In spite of arms captures and occasional defections, there is no sign of large scale weakening of Vietnamese resistance abilities or morale. The large areas under Vietnamese control lack luxuries and medicines, but are wholly self-sufficient in the basic necessities and tolerably well administered, according to what few reports are available. They continue to form a source of supplies and of fresh troops that are only limited in numbers by the arms available.

Although there are rumors of a Chinese Communist treaty with Ho Chi Minh, and of a Chinese Communist general and his staff in Northern Tonkin, there is little evidence, as yet, that the Chinese are of any considerable help in the resistance. French sources feel that there is little danger of a Chinese Communist 5th column in Cochinchina, or of an invitation on the part of Ho Chi Minh to the troops of the age-old national enemy to enter Indochina in force, in spite of the Communist link. All French military sources consulted, however, feel that a large scale Chinese Communist invasion would make most, if not all, of Tonkin, militarily untenable.

For many months past, observers feel that the resistance has not put forth its maximum effort, perhaps because the leaders are waiting for the outcome of political negotiations going on between the High Commissariat, the French Government and the Xuan-Bao Dai elements. If these should break down, the resistance will be greatly strengthened by the adhesion of many now neutral or pro-French elements. If the negotiations are successful, the resistance army is sure to be a dominant factor in any form of Vietnamese self-government.

### Comment

Having long since explored, and exhausted, the possibilities of a final military victory in Indochina, there is little incentive for the French military high command to plan beyond small scale operations of limited scope, while waiting for the politicians in Paris and Mao Tze TUNG in China to make the really decisive moves.

WHH/jr



Saigon, Indochina, February 12, 1949.

MEMORANDUM ON INDOCHINA FOR NEW DELHI FOREIGN SERVICE CONFERENCE

SECTION IV. INDOCHINESE ECONOMIC SITUATION

A. General

Indochina has an area of 285,000 square miles - half/as large as France - and a population of about 26,000,000. The population is largely concentrated in the deltas of the Red and Mekong Rivers and a narrow strip along the coast. Large parts of the interior are practically uninhabited. The economy of the country is primarily agricultural and largely based on the growing, processing, and export of rice. Rubber output was increasing rapidly before the war, and some progress had been made in developing the country's mineral resources.

Recovery since the war has been slow because of the practically continuous guerrilla warfare. Even with the return of peace it will probably take two years for production in most fields to reach prewar levels, and large capital investments would be necessary.

B. Resources

1. Agriculture

Rice is the mainstay of the native diet and by far the most important crop. Tonkin is only self supporting in exceptional years; Annam and Cambodia usually break even; while Cochinchina can produce a large surplus for export and seldom suffers a crop failure. Agricultural methods are primitive and yields per acre are low. Other important crops are corn, grown chiefly for export, sugar cane, beans, cotton, tobacco, and vegetables. Copra and oil seeds are of minor importance as are coffee, tea, and kapok.

Rubber planting began late in Indochina and reached its greatest development in the period 1925 - 1934. Present acreage is about 134,000 hectares, perhaps 20% of which has been more or less seriously damaged by the guerrillas. Potential production is estimated at 100,000 tons, but many plantations have been abandoned because of insecurity, and the balance lack labor. Production in 1948 was only about 45,000 tons. Rubber is almost entirely in French hands and the great bulk in large plantations - the 33 largest contain 60% of the total acreage. French planters have been prompt to develop and adopt modern methods, and over 40% of the trees are from grafted and selected seedlings. It is understood that cost of production is low compared with other growing regions.

2. Animal Husbandry, Fishing, and Timber

In the Vietnam, cattle and buffalo are raised chiefly for draft animals, and their numbers are still below prewar totals. Cambodia raises a fair number of beef cattle. Hogs are the most important food animal and in certain Annamite provinces are an important source of income. Goats and sheep are of minor importance. Fish forms an



important part of the native diet, and large quantities are caught in the coastal waters, the rivers and particularly in the Tonle Sap Lake in Cambodia. Large quantities of dried fish were formerly exported. While Indochina has great areas of forest and many valuable woods, their exploitation is difficult and timber has never been an important export. The cutting of construction timber and firewood is, however, an important local industry.

### 3. Minerals

The provinces of Tonkin and Laos are rich in minerals, the latter largely unexploited. High quality anthracite coal deposits are found north of Haiphong, and before the war production reached over 2,000,000 tons a year mostly by open cut mining. Production in 1948 was only 340,000 tons due to lack of machinery and labor and guerrilla activities. Coking coal is found only in insignificant quantities.

There are valuable tin deposits in North Tonkin and Central Laos. Production reached 1800 tons in 1938. Considerable crude tin was also brought down from Yunnan, China, for smelting at Haiphong. Production is at present at a standstill due to the guerrilla warfare. A few tons were flown out of Yunnan in 1943, but plans for developing this have been postponed because of the present high price of Chinese tin. Tonkinese tin ores contain tungsten, and production in 1938 reached 555 tons of concentrate.

There are valuable zinc ores in Tonkin. Production reached 25,000 tons in 1926, but dropped to about 5,000 before the war as world prices declined. These mines are also closed. Gold deposits were worked at various points before the war but were of minor importance.

There are important deposits of phosphate rock in northwest Tonkin near the Chinese frontier, the development of which was begun by the Japanese during the war. Exploitation of these rich mines will require not only the pacification of the area but large investments of capital.

Many other minerals, including iron ore, bauxite, lead, antimony, and graphite, are known to exist, and Laos particularly has only been partially prospected.

### 4. Industry

Industry is of little importance in Indochina and is chiefly concerned with the processing of agricultural and forest products. The most important manufacturing industry is the cement works near Haiphong. This produced 260,000 tons before the war and about 100,000 in 1948. Other minor industries produce alcohol, textiles, sugar, and cigarettes.

## C. Foreign Trade

### 1. Exports

Before the war rice, rubber, and corn represented 75% of the total value of exports. Of other items, only coal, dried fish, tin and cement were over 1% of the total.

Today rubber is the leading export by value. Shipments totaled about 42,000 tons in 1948. This compares favorably with prewar but is less than half of present capacity. Rice exports at 220,000 tons improved over 1947 but were only a fraction of the prewar average of over 1,500,000 tons. In 1933 over 500,000 tons of corn were exported, almost all to France. During the war production practically ceased and has made little recovery since. With the decline in the export of rice and corn, certain other products such as hides and skins, soya and other beans, pepper, and kapok have assumed relative importance.

The recovery of Indochinese exports to prewar levels depends primarily on political factors and the return of security. However, such recovery would not occur immediately on the return of peace since much destruction and deterioration has occurred which would take time to repair. Thus rice exports will be hindered for some time by failure to keep up dikes and drainage or irrigation canals, lack of junks to move the paddy, and destruction and deterioration of rice mills. Rubber could recover more quickly but many trees have been slashed or burned and factories and houses destroyed. Annual new or replanting schedules have been largely abandoned since 1945. All export industries are affected by the general deterioration of water, road, and rail transport.

Over 60%, by value, of Indochina's exports go to France and the Empire, about the same as before the war. Most of the balance goes to Singapore, Hong Kong, and China. Exports to the United States amounted to only about 3% of the total value in the first ten months of 1948. The percentage was somewhat higher before the war but has never been large and probably never will be unless the economy of the country changes sharply. We do not import rice, corn, coal, or cement, while Indochinese rubber will normally go to France.

### 2. Imports

Imports are made up of the usual selection of manufactured products which are needed by a non-industrial country of low per capita purchasing power. Due to the great need for both consumption and capital goods following six years of blockade, imports since the war have been relatively high compared with exports and have recently exceeded prewar volume.

Under the prewar system of empire preference, France naturally supplied the largest share of imports, 57% in 1933. In spite of a change to non preference as far as import duties are concerned, France has maintained her position and supplied 60% by value in 1947. Imports from the United States have been relatively larger since the war and amounted to 19% in 1947. This dropped to 14% in the first ten months of 1948. Most of the balance came from China, Hong Kong, Siam, and India.



### 3. Balance of Trade

From 1906 until the war Indochina had a favorable balance of trade except in 1923, 1931, and 1932. The balance has now sharply changed and from January to October 1948 imports were valued at 1,764 million piastres and exports only 926, a deficit of 838 million.\* The foreign exchange problem is thus acute, particularly as concerns dollars. The deficit has been made up by France under the plan for the French Union. The failure to include Indochina for direct allotments under the Marshall Plan resulted in considerable delay in the 1948 Plan, and it is only in recent weeks that certain dollar allotments have been approved. Most imports from the United States in 1948 were delayed shipments under the 1947 Plan.

The ambitious ten year plan for the reconstruction and equipment of Indochina foresees large investments of capital. The present administrators of the plan expect most of this capital to come from government sources, and there is little place for private capital, either French or foreign. It is probable that present plans will have to be considerably modified to fit the new political conditions now developing.

### 4. Finance and Currency

Internal finances are in relatively good shape in spite of the critical foreign exchange problem. The central government has derived its chief income from customs fees, excise taxes and monopolies, of which the opium monopoly is the most lucrative. Subsidies were granted to provincial governments from the central budget.

During the past year a number of changes have taken place in preparation for the new political organization. The bank note monopoly has been taken from the powerful Banque de l'Indochine and is being transferred to a new Emission Institute. A separate Indochinese Treasury has been authorized, while the revenues from the excise taxes and monopolies were technically transferred to the Associated States on January 1, 1949. All these measures contemplate a closely knit economic federation for Indochina in which French participation and influence will be prominent. The individual states, particularly the Vietnam, are strongly opposed to this, and lengthy and bitter disputes with the French on economic and financial matters can be anticipated.

The Indochinese piastre was worth 10 francs from 1934 until 1946 when the rate was changed to 17. The rate of 6.95 piastres per dollar became 12.55 as a result of the French devaluation of January 1948. In October 1948 the system of a double exchange rate was extended to Indochina, the official rate remaining at 12.55 per dollar and the "free" rate fluctuating with the free franc. Current quotations are about 19 per dollar. Foreign trade transactions take place at the average of the two rates or about 15.70. The black market rate rose during 1948 from around 40 to about 55 per dollar. Even better rates are occasionally reported from Hong Kong and Bangkok.

### 5. Cost

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\* It is difficult to convert these figures to dollars due to two devaluations during the period. Foreign trade is now conducted at about 15.7 piastres per dollar, the average between the official rate of 12.55 and the free rate of about 19.



## 5. Cost of Living

The cost of living has mounted rapidly since the war, and the index for Europeans in December 1948 was 2646 (first half 1939 = 100) compared with 1638 a year earlier. Comparative figures for native working classes were 3966 and 2802. For Americans attempting to operate at the "free" exchange rate, prices are outrageous.

Salaries tend to lag behind prices with resulting unrest among the working population and the large class of civil servants.

## 6. Conclusion

The basic problems of the economy of Indochina are similar to those of other Asiatic countries, with any increase in the standard of living tending to be checked by the rapid rise in the population. (Cambodia is an exception in that the population is static.) The development of the mineral resources and the industrialization of the country will require enormous amounts of capital and much time.

The immediate problem of restoring peace and order is primarily a political one.

GMA:MAC/jr

Saigon, Indochina, February 12, 1949.

MEMORANDUM ON INDOCHINA FOR NEW DELHI FOREIGN SERVICE CONFERENCE

SECTION V. CONSULAR AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS

Administration

A problem which confronts all small offices, no doubt, is the unusually heavy load of administrative work in proportion to the amount of creative work turned out. The requirements of the Department for administrative reports, and the quantity of administrative detail involved in the daily operation of a small office is roughly the same as for a large office. The administrative instructions and the forms prescribed are naturally drafted with large offices in mind, and their use in a small office is difficult and results in a disproportionate amount of time spent on administrative work.

It is urged that the Department investigate this matter with a view to giving additional authority to the field to make decisions and also to transferring to the Department much of the "control" records and reporting that is now demanded of the field.

Alien Staff

Saigon has been experiencing considerable trouble in finding and keeping alien personnel, particularly French employees. Business houses are in a position to offer better salaries and a shorter work week, and the Consulate has been unable to compete. Recommendations have recently been sent to Washington which, it is hoped, will somewhat ameliorate this situation. A single wage including basic wage and temporary increase has been suggested, which will be semi-annually adjusted according to changes in the cost of living index. At the same time a position classification system has been established which allows in-grade promotions for merit and service.

To encourage the alien staff to continue its work with the Government, and to make them more valuable to the office, it is hoped that some way can be found within budget limitations to provide language and stenographic lessons for those members of the staff who appear to be qualified. Stenographers are almost impossible to find in Saigon, and it is, therefore, necessary for officers to consume much valuable time in drafting correspondence for typists. The cost of such training is nominal, the time allowed during working hours for the study would be negligible, and the results undoubtedly satisfying.

Supplies and Shipping

Saigon formerly experienced serious losses in shipments of official supplies and personal effects through short shipments, theft, and breakage. It was found that clearing agents usually took little interest in consular shipments since as a rule they are small and the return for the time and effort spent on clearing does not warrant making the extra effort to supervise carefully our shipments. The Consulate was still spending much time on each shipment in arranging

for the free entry of the goods and assisting the clearing agent.

It has been found that a considerable sum of money can be saved by training an alien employee to handle the entire clearance. He has sufficient official standing to permit him to expedite papers and clearance procedures that would otherwise take days, and by devoting his full time to the clearing of the shipment and moving the goods quickly losses have been cut to a large extent.

#### Mail and Courier Service

Saigon has been experiencing considerable delay in the transmission of pouch mail, both courier and unaccompanied air pouches. It is necessary to allow up to three weeks for the transmission of mail to the Department. It is possible that other offices in this area have been experiencing the same difficulty, and it is suggested that a concerted effort be made to encourage the Department to work out a more expeditious way to handle mail to and from Southeast Asia. Sea pouches take a minimum of six weeks to reach Saigon.

It is not safe to send personal correspondence of any importance through the open mail in Indochina. In spite of firm denials there is adequate proof that a form of censorship exists. This delays mail, and encourages the loss of enclosures and small packages.

#### Visitors to Indochina

It is again desired to point out to neighboring offices that Saigon is not able to guarantee accommodations to visiting business men, and only with great difficulty and with ample notice can accommodations be arranged for official visitors. A critical housing situation is not peculiar to Saigon. However, consular residences here are small and with the exception of the consul general's residence do not possess guest rooms. Even a confirmed reservation usually means a bed in a dormitory with from three to ten people.

Many unofficial travelers have been giving the Consulate General as a reference when applying for an entry visa. The French officials call at the Consulate General anticipating that we will give a guarantee of lodging. This, of course, is not possible, and it is, therefore, again urged that businessmen and tourists be warned that there may not be any accommodation available in Saigon and that they should make no attempt to come to Indochina unless they are assured in advance of lodging.

#### Consular

##### General

Saigon concurs with Batavia that some effort should be made to provide an operations manual for each consular office. New officers coming to the field for the first time, even after a training period in Washington, find it most difficult to familiarize themselves with their work. Often they are replacing someone who has already left

the post



the post or who leaves shortly after his arrival. It is impossible to assimilate all the details of procedure in a short time, and for this reason detailed operating instructions should be made available.

The precedent file gives much valuable information about conditions peculiar to one particular post. However, for instructions regarding shipping, seamen, visas, and passports or notarials, a detailed guide is essential. In a small post an officer may never, during his tenure, have occasion to issue certain types of visas or experience unusual shipping and seamen problems. But occasionally these situations do arise, and an unexperienced officer has no recourse but to refer to some guide for assistance.

The Foreign Service Regulations are, of course, the basic manual. Experience has proven, however, that the sections on visas, passports, shipping and seamen, immigration and notarials are noticeably inadequate when detailed instructions are required. In the interest of efficient office routine and the proper execution of consular duties within the bounds of our present budget limitations, which makes it essential to operate with a small staff and a maximum of productive effort, it is urged that these portions of the regulations be re-examined with a view to improving their content so that they may serve as a helpful guide.

#### Telegram Rates

This post also agrees with Batavia that a concerted effort should be made to obtain reductions in telegraph rates between posts in this region. It is desired to point out to neighboring posts that there is considerable delay in transmission of telegrams between countries since radio circuits are open only once or at most twice a day, usually at night. Thus persons traveling by air to Saigon often reach here before the telegram announcing their arrival.

DNC/jr

## OUTGOING TELEGRAM ✓

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6 P.M.

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7-2124

MAY 10 1949

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AMCONSUL

SAIGON, INDOCHINA

77

Assumption Urtel 141 Dept desires success Baodai

experiment entirely correct. Since appears be no other  
alternative to estab Commie pattern Vietnam, Dept considers  
no effort shld be spared by FR, other Western powers, and  
non-Commie Asian nations to assure experiment best chance  
succeeding.

At proper time and under proper circumstances Dept will  
be prepared do its part by extending recognition Baodai Govt  
and by exploring possibility of complying with any request  
by such Govt for US arms and econ assistance. Must be under-  
stood however aid program this nature wld require Congressional  
approval. Since US cld however scarcely afford backing govt  
which wld have color and be likely suffer fate of puppet regime,  
it must first be clear FR will offer all necessary concessions  
to make Baodai solution attractive to nationalists. This is  
step of which FR themselves must see urgent necessity view  
possibly short time remaining before Commie successes Chi a  
felt Indochina. Moreover, Baodai Govt must through own efforts  
demonstrate capacity organize and conduct affairs wisely so  
to ensure maximum opportunity obtaining requisite popular  
support inasmuch as govt created Indochina

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351G.01/E-649

351G.01/E-649

Indochina analogous Kuomintang wld be foredoomed failure.

Assuming essential FR concessions are forthcoming, best chance success Baodai wld appear lie in persuading Vietnamese nationalists (1) their patriotic aims may be realized promptly through FR-Baodai agreement (2) Baodai govt will be truly representative even to extent including outstanding non-Commie leaders now supporting Ho and (3) Baodai solution probably only means safeguarding Vietnam from aggressive designs Commie Chi. While attainment these objectives depends initially upon attitude FR and Baodai circle, Dept believes more will ultimately be required. Best hope might lie in active demonstration of interest in and support of Baodai solution by other non-Commie Asian govts. Appeal such solution to Vietnam nationalists wld presumably be far greater if it appeared sponsored by free Asian nations animated by interest self-determination Asian peoples and their own self-preservation in face immed Commie menace rather than if it had appearance gambit engineered by FR, US and UK as part strategy of West-East conflict.

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Dept giving closest consideration to means whereby US might assist attainment these ends.

From above, you will see Dept thinking closely parallels

your

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your own. Dept agrees when time comes Baodai must certainly be fully warned of danger yielding to any temptation include Commies his govt and this connection again believes other Asian govts old serve most useful purpose since India, Siam, Philippines, and Indonesians (both Repubs and Federalists) are fully alive growing Commie threat Asia.

Re last para Urtel 141 QTE reliability Baodai solution UNQTE was error. Deptel 70 shld have read QTE viability UNQTE meaning able live.

While Dept continues believe it wld be premature and unwise for you make special point (such as trip Dalat) see Baodai, there no objection your talking informally with polit personalities close to him with whom you have doubtless already made contact in normal course carrying out your functions. In such talks you might well as suggested Urtel 141 take occasion cite examples futility collaboration Commies and grave danger such course.

ACHESON

Acheson  
(R)

Telegraph Branch:

Send: AMCONSUL, SAIGON - 77 Repeat: AMEMBASSY, PARIS 1574

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MAY 20 1949

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SAIGON, INDOCHINA

63

Urtel 147: *8512.01/5-1349(41)*

Dept believes extent to which FR concessions embodied Mar 8 agreements will satisfy nationalists can be determined only by reaction nationalists themselves. Meanwhile wld appreciate your view.

While not fully informed provisions Mar 8 agreements plus associated documents, Dept fears nationalist opinion will follow line Duoc Viet editorial Apr 9 which states QTE although Vietnamese reassured on score their country's unification, they remain uneasy about question foreign relations and army. Vietnam sovereignty will not permit Vietnamese army be commanded by FR general nor will requirement of sovereignty be satisfied by diplomatic representation only in China, Siam and Vatican. UNQTE

As practical matter, Dept believes that when independence movement in colony too strong to be defeated, metropolitan power if it wishes preserve influence in area has no real choice but attempt establish special relationship with former colony based free acceptance terms by latter, and that assoc between metro-  
politan power and former colony is more likely prove fruitful and durable if based free consent of latter than if transfer of

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8512.01/5-1349

8512.01/5-1349

of autonomous powers to latter is made conditional upon its acceptance of such important qualifications upon its independence as continued metropolitan control its foreign relations and command armed forces.

persuaded  
However, Dept/UNAM FR unlikely make further concessions this time and that any US efforts press them do so wld probably miscarry. (Paris to indicate if this not correct.)  
Hope is, therefore, that FR will carry out their obligations under Mar 8 agreements with such generosity and expedition that impressively constructive atmosphere will be created and that at same time Viet nationalists will rapidly appreciate true character menace approaching from Chi and will prefer cooperate Bao Dai solution rather than accept alternative continued resistance and risk loss all real autonomy to Chi Commies. Presumably such outcome not impossible particularly if FR cld let it be understood Bao Dai agreement does not permanently define status Vietnam but provides basis for further early evolution.

At same time, shld it appear as Dept fears that FR are offering too little too late, Dept will not be inclined make up for FR deficiencies by rushing into breach to support Bao Dai agreements at cost its own remaining prestige Asia. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
Dept considers US this stage shld avoid conspicuous position any  
Kind

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kind and try reach common attitude with other interested govts,  
particularly UK, India and Philippines.

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(RE)

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5/18/49

WE

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R

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AMCONSUL

HANOI, INDOCHINA

Reur informative tel 38:

In talks Kuan and sees his govt you may take for him as representing consensus informed Americans:

In light Ho's known background, no other assumption possible but that he outright Commie so long as (1) he fails unequivocally repudiate Assoc's connections and Commie doctrine and (2) remains personally singled out for praise by internal Commie press and receives its support. Moreover, US not impressed by nationalist character red flag with yellow stars. Question whether Ho as much nationalist as Commie is irrelevant. All Stalinists in colonial areas are nationalists. With achievement natl aims (i.e., independence) their objective necessarily becomes subordination state to Commie purposes and ruthless extermination not only opposition groups but all elements suspected even slightest deviation. On basis examples eastern Eur it must be assumed such wld be goal Ho and ran his stamp if included Bao Dai Govt. To include them in order achieve reconciliation opposing polit elements and QRS national unity UNQTE wld merely postpone settlement issue whether Vietnam to be independent nation or Commie satellite until circumstances

probably

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probably even less favorable nationalists than now. It must of course be conceded theoretical possibility exists establish National Communist state on pattern Yugoslavia in any area beyond reach Soviet army. However, US attitude could take account such possibility only if every other possible avenue closed to preservation area from Kremlin control. Moreover, while Vietnam out of reach Soviet army it will doubtless be by no means out of reach Chi Commie hatchet men and armed forces.

Fol is for urinfo and such reference as you deem judicious:

Dept naturally considers only FR can through concessions to nationalist movement lay basis for solution Indochina problem. As suggested Deptel 113 to Saigon, if nationalists find concessions Mar 6 agreements inadequate, much may depend upon willingness FR put agreements in most favorable possible context by emphasizing expectations rapid evolution Vietnam beyond status envisaged those agreements. Provided FR display such realistic and generous attitude, most important part remainder immed program--viz, winning support nationalists away from Commie leadership--must devolve upon Bao Dai and Kuan group seconded by other South Asian govts who stand in most immed danger from Commie conquest Indochina and who by full polit and propaganda

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propaganda support Baodai solution might more than anyone else be able deprive Ho of talking-points in event he continues demand armed resistance Baodai regardless circumstances (which appears certain in light vitriolic tone current Vietminh broadcasts on Baodai which give no recognition any FR concessions to nationalist demands.) Even with conditions for US support Baodai realized, it futile expect US be able assist effectively this initial task beyond stressing requirements situation in talks South Asian govts and providing materials evidencing realities of Communism through USIS for distribution as you and Congen Saigon consider desirable in conjunction with Baodai efforts arouse compatriots to Commie menace. Experience Chi has shown no amt US mil and econ aid can save govt, even if recognized by all other powers and possessed full opportunity achieve natl aims, unless it can rally support people against Commies by affording representation all important natl groups, manifesting devotion to natl as opposed personal or party interests, and demonstrating real leadership.

Re Viet opinion reported Saigon's 145 that US abandonment Nationalist China presents unfavorable augury for non-Commie regime Vietnam, there no objection emphasizing to persons with this view that Nationalist China came to present pass through deficiency

above

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above qualities and lack will to fight, not because US QTE wrote it off UNQTE.

Re Xuan query whether US wld propose Vietnam for membership UN shld FR renig, you shld avoid discussion this matter, at most if pressed state circumstances at moment will of course determine US action. For urinfo only it unlikely US old even vote for Vietnam membership UN if as it appears now FR wld remain in control Vietnam for relations.

ACHESON

*Acheson*  
(RIS)

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Repeat to: AMCONSUL,  
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No. 201

The Honorable

David K. E. Bruce,  
American Ambassador,  
Paris.

Sir:

There is transmitted herewith a memorandum setting forth the Department's views on the agreement signed on March 8 by the President of France and the former Emperor of Annam defining the future status of the State of Vietnam. You are requested to present this memorandum to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the French Government.

It is suggested that the Embassy's note transmitting the memorandum be composed along the following lines:

"The Embassy of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, on instruction from its government, has the honor to transmit herewith certain comments of the Department of State on the agreement concluded on March 8, 1949, between the President of the French Republic and the former Emperor of Annam, which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was kind enough to make available to the Government of the United States."

As an alternative, the presentation of the note by Mr. Charles E. Bohlen may appear preferable. The problems dealt with in the memorandum were discussed in a conversation with the Secretary of State shortly before his departure from Washington at which Mr. Bohlen was present.

Very truly yours,

For the Acting Secretary of State:

DSR NEUM	
Att. <i>[initials]</i>	
Re. <i>[initials]</i>	
Dat. <i>[initials]</i>	
Dist. <i>[initials]</i>	Enclosure

W. Walton Butterworth  
Director for Far Eastern Affairs

✓ Original and two copies  
of memorandum

2000

JUN 3 1949

3516.01/5-349

CS/A

3516.01/5-349



The Government of the United States is most appreciative of the action of the French Government in making available to it the text of the agreement concluded on March 8 between the President of France and the former Emperor of Annam defining the future status of the State of Vietnam. The agreement has been studied with the greatest interest by the Department of State.

As the French Government is aware, the United States Government has followed with some concern the course of events in French Indochina since the end of the war in the Pacific. This concern, it is needless to say, has been prompted by a realization that the forces which have contributed predominantly to the character of the Vietnamese nationalist movement are manifestations of the same forces which have worked profound changes in southern Asia generally and that the outcome of these

in general.

When at the end of the war it became evident that in most of the dependant countries of southern Asia the indigenous peoples were determined to control their own destinies in the future, the United States Government ventured to hope that the western nations would appreciate the strength of this resolution and willingly grant the essential demands of the nationalist movements. It was believed that in so doing, the metropolitan powers would be yielding what in any case they could expect to hold only by military force at great cost. In such event it seemed probable that the costs to the Metropolitan Government would be unrecoverable and the value of the colony and its possible contribution to world stability would be reduced by the ensuing hostilities. On the other hand it was believed that by promptly offering the necessary political concessions to the nationalist demands the metropolitan power would be adopting the course most likely

to result in a continued close and mutually fruitful relationship with the former colony, in the preservation of patterns of trade and economy long intermeshed, and in a readiness on the part of the colonial people to welcome the continued technical and administrative assistance of the metropolitan power. It appeared that only on such a basis would there be any real hope that the Western powers could retain their legitimate interests in the countries so closely associated with them over such long periods, and that among the new nations of southern Asia conditions of political stability and of freedom of political and economic development could be achieved enabling them to realise their potentialities and make their full contribution to the world.

Conversely, it seemed that an intention on the part of the metropolitan power to retain an authority which the dependent people was determined to exercise itself could result only in turning the nationalist movement into destructive channels. In these circumstances it



could be expected that widespread hostilities would result and that the consequent destruction of the facilities of production in the dependent area would cause economic setbacks seriously injurious to both peoples. Furthermore, it could be anticipated that the nationalist forces would turn increasingly to an uncompromising leadership which would react against cooperation with the West and against those free institutions which European civilization has evolved through long experience in self-government.

Events in southern Asia in the past four years have caused no revision of these views; and it is in the light of this estimate that the United States Government has examined the agreement of March 8 and offers its views.

Because of its conviction that concessions by France to the Nationalist movement commensurate with the strength of that movement can alone provide the basis for a resolution of the Indochinese situation and the creation of a stable, representative Vietnamese Government, the United States Government welcomes the step taken by the President of France in arriving at an agreement with ex-Emperor Bao

Dal whereby the territorial unity of Vietnam, comprising Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina, may be realized and the Vietnamese State enjoy far-reaching powers of internal autonomy. It may be stated at once that in the opinion of the United States Government the Vietnamese people would be guilty of a mistake disastrous to their future should they reject this solution and give their support not to the Vietnamese Government formed under the March 3 agreement but to the so-called Democratic Republic of Vietnam. For those in command of this Republic are men trained in the methods and doctrine of international communism, and regardless of their present espousal of the nationalist cause, it cannot be ignored that they have never disavowed their Kremlin connections, or repudiated the techniques and objectives of communism, which are the cause of so much suffering in the world today. It must be assumed, therefore, that should their government succeed in its aims, with the support or through the acquiescence of the Vietnamese people, the pattern of a foreign

totalitarianism will be clamped upon Vietnam under which all liberties, national and personal, will be lost. Such an outcome would not only be fatal to the welfare and hopes of the Vietnamese but would be most detrimental to the interests of all free peoples, particularly those of southern Asia who stand in most immediate danger of further Communist aggression.

However, the United States Government does not feel confident that the Vietnamese people in general will see the choice confronting them in these terms, especially in view of the isolating factors in their situation during most of the past decade. The Vietnamese nationalists who for the most part have been supporting the so-called Democratic Republic of Vietnam as the one agency which appeared to promise independence may not, it is feared, find the provisions of the March 8 agreement entirely appealing. In this connection, it should be pointed out that the United States Government is considering only this agreement since it is not familiar with the contents



of any associated documents which may bear upon the nature and does not know whether the March 6 agreement is intended to define the status of Vietnam permanently or to provide a basis for the further early evolution of the Vietnamese State.

The United States Government is inclined to believe that one of the strongest motivating forces behind nationalist movements among dependent peoples is resentment of the imputation of inferiority implicit in a subordinate status. When a people has fought for the goal of independence with such tenacity as that displayed by the Vietnamese resistance forces, it appears unlikely that it will be content with a position of anything less than equality with other peoples. It is feared that the concessions granted by the French Government may be obscured in the eyes of the Vietnamese by those terms of the agreement which are incompatible with Vietnamese national pride.

Should such feelings determine the reaction of the majority of Vietnamese<sup>am</sup> to a Government formed under the

March 8 agreement, then it must be supposed that the Communist-dominated "Democratic Republic of Vietnam" will continue to receive the support of these Vietnamese.

Certainly as long as the Vietnamese are persuaded that the two-and-a-half-year-old war with France must be prosecuted to a conclusion if the goals for which they have fought are to be won, they will continue to regard the dominant Communist element of the Vietminh League in the light of its effective leadership of the nationalist movement and not of its inevitable intention to subvert the nationalist cause in the end to the requirements of international Communism, with which they have had little acquaintance as yet.

The United States Government would be lacking in frankness if it did not state that in its considered estimation the paramount question in Indochina now is whether the country is to be saved from Communist control. Under the circumstances, all other issues must be regarded as irrelevant. Much time has already been lost. The years since the end of the Pacific War have seen the Communist threat to Indochina intensified rather than other-

wise. The southward progress of Chinese Communist armies toward the northern frontier of Indochina introduces a new element that transforms an already serious situation into an emergency.

As it has made clear in the past, the United States Government is of the opinion that it must prove difficult to save this situation and to preserve Indochina from a foreign tyranny unless the French Government offers the Vietnamese the attainment of those nationalist goals which they would continue to fight for rather than forego and unless the Vietnamese can be convinced that they can, in fact, fully realize their patriotic aims through co-operation with the Government envisaged in the March 8 agreement. In its view, developments have reduced the choice in Indochina to simple alternatives: will Vietnam achieve independence through an agreement with France and with the assistance of France and maintain this independence fortified by collaboration with France, or will it achieve independence from France while at the same time falling victim to Communist totalitarianism?



the United States Government believes that the Vietnamese will willingly accept a partnership with France only if the equality of Vietnam is recognized and if, as a prior condition to the determination of the character of this relationship, the sovereignty of Vietnam is acknowledged. Observation of developments in southern Asia since the end of the war would seem to leave little doubt that a Union between France and Vietnam would be far more likely of attainment and would prove more fruitful and enduring if attained were the Union conceived not as an instrument for the control of one member by the other but as an agency of cooperation in fields of common interest, diplomatic, military, economic, and cultural, voluntarily espoused on both sides.

An approach to the future on these lines would appear to offer the greatest hope that French influence in Indochina may be preserved, which must be regarded as unquestionably to the best interests of the Indochinese, and that military and naval bases in Vietnam may be re-

induced by France and French economic rights be assured. . .  
by adopting this course the metropolitan country would  
appear to have little to lose and much to gain. Moreover,  
from a strictly practical point of view, the United States  
Government has been impressed by the difficulties likely  
to arise if in transferring autonomous powers to the  
government of a dependent territory the metropolitan  
power seeks, as a condition to such transfer, to subdivide  
sovereignty in the area by retaining certain transcendent  
rights to itself. For in this case the question of the  
precise division of authority is prone to present itself  
in connection with every field of government as the process  
of transfer is planned. In consequence, the prestige  
and good will which should accrue to the metropolitan  
power from its acceptance of a new order is likely to be  
dissipated in an atmosphere of discord and mistrust, as  
suspicion grows among the nationalists that the metropoli-  
tan power is in fact seeking to perpetuate its existing  
controls. In consequence the process of giving definition



the enterprise.

A dispassionate appraisal leads the United States Government to believe, in short, that the preservation of Indochina's integrity depends, in the first place, upon the willingness of the metropolitan country to give assurances that Vietnam is to exercise control of its destinies; that its participation in the French Union will be upon terms freely accepted by representatives enjoying the confidence of the Vietnamese people when these shall have been assembled; that the powers of administration exercised by France in Vietnam will be transferred to the Vietnamese as soon as conditions permit the institution and functioning of the new regime; and that the deployment of French forces in Vietnam outside their bases is to be accounted for in terms of the defense of Vietnam against the protagonists of a supra-national totalitarianism who would surrender Vietnam to alien controls.



In the second place, much would appear to depend upon the readiness of the heads of the Vietnamese Government formed under the March 8 agreement to invite the participation in this Government of bonafide and truly nationalist leaders of Vietnam, including those who have heretofore supported the "Democratic Republic of Vietnam", to the end that this Government may provide dynamic leadership and obtain the confidence of the nationalist elements comprising the major part of the resistance forces.

Such an approach to the problem would best appear to lay the basis for the clear separation of nationalists from Communist elements in Vietnam; for those who persisted in resisting a Vietnamese Government through which all nationalist aims could be realized in favor of continued adherence to the "Democratic Republic of Vietnam" would in effect be acknowledging that their goals were not nationalist but Communist. The achievement of this distinction would appear to be the sine qua non of a solution of the Indochina problem.

Having demonstrated its capacity to rally the nationalist majority of Vietnamese to its support, the Government formed under the March 8 agreement would -- it would seem to the United States Government -- have grounds for appealing for the support of all free nations. The United States Government would hope that this appeal would be generally heeded, especially by the other Governments of southern Asia which, themselves having every reason to regard the further extension of Communist controls in the region with alarm, could fill a vitally important role by clarifying for the Vietnamese people the issues confronting them on the basis of their own experience and undoubted fidelity to the cause of self-determination by the Asian peoples.

The United States Government is, however, convinced that if the requisite concessions by the French Government to the nationalist demands are not forthcoming, the task of the Government envisaged in the March 8 agreement must prove most difficult of accomplishment and the countries adjacent to Indochina will most likely be confronted by



the prospect of the appearance of sizable Communist-controlled forces on their frontiers.

It goes without saying that the earnest hope of the United States Government is that the Government formed under the March 8 agreement will succeed in its crucial task. At the same time it would appear axiomatic that insofar as the probabilities of its success are related to the extent of international support it obtains, the decision of a third party in respect of the feasibility of its extending support or assistance must be governed by the extent to which the French Government has itself provided that Government with the political advantages upon which its appeal to the Vietnamese must be based. Clearly the success of this Government must rest in the first instance upon those means of accomplishing its purpose which only the French Government can provide.

In taking advantage of the relations of cordiality and mutual understanding it enjoys with the French Government by offering this frank appraisal, the United States Government has been prompted only by the thought that it



should not leave the direction of its thinking a matter of doubt and that an exchange of views might be advantageous considering all that is involved in the outcome of the situation in Indochina.

JUN 6 1949

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Cleared with EUR and WFR

June 10, 1949

NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

to the

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

on

U. S. POLICY TOWARD ASIA

The enclosed memorandum by the Secretary of Defense on the subject is circulated herewith for the information of the National Security Council and referred to the NSC Staff; as requested in the second paragraph thereof, for the preparation of a report for consideration by the Council.

SIDNEY W. SOUERS  
Executive Secretary

DISTRIBUTION:

The President  
The Secretary of State  
The Secretary of Defense  
The Secretary of the Army  
The Secretary of the Navy  
The Secretary of the Air Force  
The Chairman, National Security  
Resources Board

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THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
Washington

June 10, 1949

MEMORANDUM FOR THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

Subj: United States Policy Toward Asia

1. I am becoming increasingly concerned at the course of events in Asia. The advance of communism in large areas of the world and particularly the successes of communism in China seriously affect the future security of the United States. I am aware that this critical situation is being watched closely in the several departments of the government, and I appreciate that the current problems are being handled as realistically as circumstances permit. It occurs to me, however, that this day-to-day, country-by-country approach may not develop a broad program in our best long-range interests.

2. A major objective of United States policy, as I understand it, is to contain communism in order to reduce its threat to our security. Our actions in Asia should be part of a carefully considered and comprehensive plan to further that objective. I therefore request that the staff of the National Security Council undertake as soon as practicable a study of the current situation in Asia to re-examine and correlate current policies and to appraise the commitments and risks involved in the various courses of action--political, economic and military--which might be undertaken in support of the broad objective and recommend for the consideration of the National Security Council an appropriate plan of action outlining specific objectives to be achieved.

/s/ LOUIS JOHNSON



Collect

Charge Department

Charge to

Department of State

6. Police  
SECRET  
CONFIDENTIAL

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JUN 20 1949

AMEMBASSY,

RANGOON.

14-5

On JUN 14 new Vietnam State ESTAB under Bao Dai as associated state of FR Union with wide attributes internal and external sovereignty but with FR retaining measure of control over external relations and defense, FR troops remaining in Vietnam. Refer Fortnightly summaries for additional background especially Bao Dai statement JUN 14.

DEPT will make statement to press JUN 21 substantially same DEFCINTEL JUN 14.

FBI DEPT Recently sent Paris for delivery FOROFF memo commenting MAR-C agreement (basis new Vietnam State), expressing view success Bao Dai solution depends first instance upon readiness FR provide him with means satisfying aims nationalist majority Vietnam, that if requisite FR concessions forthcoming and Viet GOVT evidences capacity rally support substantial percentage Vietns such GOVT will have grounds for appealing for support free nations, which US hopes will be generally heeded. Child FR GOVT and Viet GOVT engaged MAR 8 agreement make success this venture.

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US with expectation coordination BRIT wld seek obtain backing other South Asian GOVTS and itself lend support including recognition new regime and extension such assistance as possible in circumstances. Other hand, shld FR and Viet GOVTS fall short what incumbent upon them, US wld refrain from supporting Bao Dai solution and it wld be clear as to why US unable prevent COMMIE control Vietnam.

Memo will be delivered only orally and in part as EMB Paris reports its delivery at this time wld impede rather than encourage FR to move along lines DEPT desires.

If Bao Dai regime succeeds and we are able get Indian approval Bao Dai GOVT, possibility may eventually develop get GOB approval. However understand Burmese have friendly attitude Ho Chi Minh faction which believed propagandizing in BURM against Bao Dai.

For your consideration and action your discretion we suggestion  
advance/that you explain GOB importance to Asia of success Bao Dai regime which might thereby create bulwark against COMMIE control Vietnam. If COMMIES gain control IG, THAI and rest SEA will be imperiled. You may also express hope GOB will refrain from public statements which



WLD prejudice chances his success.

In explaining our position GOB you may PT out that failure Bao Dai experiment may well result shortly in COMMIE control IC; that in view internal POLIT practicalities FR, MAR 8 agreement represents for moment maximum concessions which FR GOVT could make; that Bao Dai is only person visible at present about whom Vietnamese nationalists may group. You may also PT out that Ho Chi Min has long record as agent of third INTERNATIONAL including service SOV CONS to Canton 1925 under Bowdine, was organizer IC COMMIE Party and that his recent actions have not changed DEPT's belief that he remains COMMIE.

You may state that US regards INSTAB Bao Dai GOVT as only first step in evolution Vietnam problem and that we believe in time FR will have to move far beyond concessions thus far made in order accommodate nationalist aspirations Vietnamese people.

Even if impracticable for you approach GOB along these lines now, foregoing explanation our position may be



useful replying any questions this matter from GOB  
officials.

FYI DEPT planning approach THAI and PHIL GOVTS  
with view obtain some public expression encouragement  
for Bao Dai solution.

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(Bfm)

WEBB

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6-20-49

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Cleared in  
draft with SEA  
Mr. O'Sullivan and  
Mr. Reed

★ U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1949 703653

INCOMING AIRGRAM  
Department of State

2027

FROM: Amembassy, London

DATE: NOV 9, 1949

RECD: Nov. 15, 1949 2:12 pm

Mailed: Unknown

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Secretary of State,  
Washington.

A-2063

Following in substance are the recommendations made at the Singapore Conference in regard to Indo-China:

1. A failure of the Bao Dai experiment would inevitably result in a complete French withdrawal from Indo-China; therefore U.S. and Commonwealth Governments should join the UK in assisting the French in support of Bao Dai.

2. In view of the urgency of the situation Western nations cannot afford to await prior sponsorship of Bao Dai by the Asiatic nations. It is therefore recommended that after the transfer of sovereignty to Vietnam on January 1 the UK support the new regime.

3. Following action is recommended:

- a. The French should be asked to clarify the legal status of the Vietnam.
- b. De jure recognition is not possible until March 8th Agreement is ratified. It is therefore recommended that de facto recognition of Vietnam be granted on the

A-2053

Dated: NOV 9, 1949

From: Ambassador, London.

transfer of sovereignty. It would be desirable to inform Bao Dai of the British Government's intention before the British Government recognizes the new Chinese government.

- c. The French should be encouraged to expedite the ratification of the March 8th Agreement and the transfer of the control of Indo-Chinese affairs from the Ministry of Overseas France to the Foreign Office.

4. It is hoped that Secretary of State Acheson will issue a public statement with regard to Indo-China similar to that made with regard to Hong Kong on May 18th when he stated that in the event of an attack on Hong Kong the United States will fulfil its duties under the Charter of the United Nations.

5. The UK should consult closely with the French in Indo-China with regard to anti-Communist propaganda.

6. Neutrality from India is the most that can be expected.

BLISS



December 23, 1949

NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

to the

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

on

THE POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES  
WITH RESPECT TO ASIA

Reference: NSC 48 and related papers.

The enclosed report on the subject has been prepared by the NSC staff pursuant to NSC 48 and related papers, with the advice and assistance of representatives of the Secretaries of State and Defense and of the Acting Chairman, National Security Resources Board and the Director of Central Intelligence.

The enclosure is submitted herewith for discussion at the special meeting of the National Security Council scheduled for December 29, 1949, and for whatever action the Council may decide to take with respect thereto.

SIDNEY W. SOUERS  
Executive Secretary

cc: The Secretary of the Treasury

NSC 48/1

December 23, 1949

D R A F T

REPORT BY THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

on

THE POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES  
WITH RESPECT TO ASIA

THE PROBLEM

1. To assess and appraise the position of the United States with respect to Asia\* on the basis of our national security interests.

ANALYSIS

General Considerations

2. The peoples and countries of Asia have in common a heavy pressure of population on scanty or underdeveloped natural resources and a consequent meager standard of living: disruption experienced in the war: the vigorous nationalistic spirit which characterizes newly independent states or restive colonies: and active discontent with their prevailing social, economic and political institutions. In other words the Asians share poverty, nationalism, and revolution. The United States position with respect to Asia is therefore that of a rich and powerful country dealing with a have-not and sensitively nationalistic area, and of competition together with friendly countries against the USSR for influence on the form and direction of the Asiatic revolutions.

\*For the purposes of this report "Asia" is defined as that part of the continent of Asia south of the USSR and east of Iran together with the major off-shore islands--Japan, Formosa, the Philippines, Indonesia and Ceylon.

3. Asia is an area of significant potential power--political, economic and military. The development in this region of stable and independent countries friendly to the United States and seeking to direct their potential power into constructive channels would enhance the security of Asia and strengthen the world position of the United States. Conversely, the domination of Asia by a nation or coalition of nations capable of exploiting the region for purposes of self-aggrandizement would threaten the security of Asia and of the United States. Recognition of these principles has been implicit in our traditional policies toward Asia: We have consistently favored a system of independent states and opposed aggrandizement of any powers which threatened eventual domination of the region.

4. Our over-all objective with respect to Asia must be to assist in the development of truly independent, friendly, stable and self-sustaining states in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. In order to achieve this, we must concurrently oppose the domination of Asia by any single country or coalition. It is conceivable that in the course of time a threat of domination may come from such nations as Japan, China, or India, or from an Asiatic bloc. But now and for the foreseeable future it is the USSR which threatens to dominate Asia through the complementary instruments of communist conspiracy and diplomatic pressure supported by military strength. For the foreseeable future, therefore, our immediate objective must be to contain and where feasible to reduce the power and influence of the USSR in



Asia to such a degree that the Soviet Union is not capable of threatening the security of the United States from that area and that the Soviet Union would encounter serious obstacles should it attempt to threaten the peace, national independence or stability of the Asiatic nations.

#### Political Considerations

5. Asia is in the throes of political upheaval. Communist attempts to capture leadership of this revolution, nationalism and the revolt against colonial rule, the emergence of new nations, the decline of western influence, the absence of a stabilizing balance of power, the prevalence of terrorism, economic distress and social unrest, and the repercussions of the struggle between the Soviet world and the free world are currently disruptive forces. The conditions now prevailing in Asia render the realization of United States objectives there difficult and facilitate expansion of the area of both communist control and Soviet influence.

6. The USSR is now an Asiatic power of the first magnitude with expanding influence and interests extending throughout continental Asia and into the Pacific. Since the defeat of Japan, which ended a balance of power that had previously restrained Russian pressures in China and the Pacific, the Soviet Union has been able to consolidate its strategic position until the base of Soviet power in Asia now comprises not only the Soviet Far East, but also China north of the Great Wall, Northern Korea, Sakhalin, and the Kuriles. The islands of Japan and the subcontinent shared by India and Pakistan are the major Asian power centers remaining outside the

N O T E

Due to a mechanical failure, Numbers 229 through 238 were not used in consecutive pagination. The text of Page 228 is continued without omission on the page numbered 239.

Soviet orbit. If Japan, the principal component of a Far Eastern war-making complex, were added to the Stalinist bloc, the Soviet Asian base could become a source of strength capable of shifting the balance of world power to the disadvantage of the United States. Should India and Pakistan fall to communism, the United States and its friends might find themselves denied any foothold on the Asian mainland.

7. While the military advantages of this position to the USSR are great, the general Far Eastern situation also gives the USSR significant political advantages. In estimating the degree of political pressure that the USSR may exert from its present position in Asia, it should be remembered that its proteges deal with Asiatic peoples who are traditionally submissive to power when effectively applied and habituated to authoritarian government and the suppression of the individual. Moreover, the USSR in Asia as elsewhere with relatively little overt interference in other states, at relatively small cost, and at limited risk, is able to give assistance and impetus to native communist movements. The political offensive of the Kremlin or its proteges also tends to gather additional momentum as each new success increases the vulnerability of the next target.

8. Japan has ceased to be a world power, but retains the capability of becoming once more a significant Asiatic power. Whether its potential is developed and the way in which it is used will strongly influence the future patterns of politics in Asia. As a result of the occupation, Japan's political structure has been



basically altered and notable steps have been taken toward the development of democratic institutions and practices. Despite these advances, however, traditional social patterns, antithetical to democracy, remain strong. The demonstrated susceptibility of these patterns to totalitarian exploitation is enhanced by economic maladjustment which may grow more serious as a result of population increases and of obstacles to the expansion of trade.

9. Although, in terms of the Japanese context, an extreme right-wing movement might be more effective in exploiting traditional patterns and current dislocations than one of the extreme left, a number of factors combine to make the threat of Communism a serious one. These factors include the close proximity to a weak and disarmed Japan of Communist areas with the attendant opportunities for infiltration, clandestine support of Japanese Communist efforts, and diplomatic pressure backed by a powerful threat; the potential of Communist China as a source of raw materials vital to Japan and a market for its goods; and the existence in Japan of an ably-led, aggressive, if still relatively weak, Communist movement which may be able to utilize Japanese tendencies toward passive acceptance of leadership to further its drive for power while at the same time exploiting economic hardship to undermine the acceptability to the Japanese of other social patterns that are antithetical to Communist doctrines.

10. Even if totalitarian patterns in Japan were to reassert themselves in the form of extreme right-wing rather than Communist domination, the prospect would remain that Japan would find more

compelling the political and economic factors moving it toward accommodation to the Soviet orbit internationally, however anti-Communist its internal policies, than those that move it toward military alliance with the United States. Extreme right-wing domination of Japan, moreover, although less immediately menacing to the United States than Communist control would represent a failure, particularly marked in the eyes of other non-Communist Asiatic countries, of a major United States political effort.

11. A middle of the road regime in Japan retaining the spirit of the reform program, even if not necessarily the letter, would in the long-run prove more reliable as an ally of the United States than would an extreme right-wing totalitarian government. Under such a regime the channels would be open for those elements in Japan that have gained most from the occupation to exercise their influence over government policy and to mold public opinion. Such a regime would undoubtedly wish to maintain normal political and economic relations with the Communist bloc and, in the absence of open hostilities, would probably resist complete identification either with the interests of the United States or the Soviet Union. The existence of such a regime, however, will make possible the most effective exercise of United States political and economic influence in the direction of ensuring Japan's friendship, its ability to withstand external and internal Communist pressure, and its further development in a democratic direction.

12. The basic United States non-military objectives in Japan, therefore, remain the promotion of democratic forces and economic stability before and after the peace settlement. To further this



objective the United States must seek to reduce to a minimum occupation or post-occupation interference in the processes of Japanese Government while at the same time providing protection for the basic achievements of the occupation and the advice and assistance that will enable the Japanese themselves to perpetuate these achievements; provide further economic assistance to Japan and, in concert with its allies, facilitate the development of mutually beneficial economic relations between Japan and all other countries of the world; make it clear to Japan that the United States will support it against external aggression while at the same time avoiding the appearance that its policies in Japan are dictated solely by considerations of strategic self-interest and guarding against Japan's exploitation of its strategic value to the United States for ends contrary to United States policy interests; and promote the acceptance of Japan as a peaceful, sovereign member of the community of nations.

13. The United States has taken the lead in assisting the efforts of the Korean people to regain that independence promised them at Cairo. In NSC 8/2, approved by the President on March 23, 1949, it was agreed that "if the significant gains made thus far, in terms both of the welfare and aspirations of the Korean people and of the national interest of the United States are to be consolidated, the United States must continue to give political support and economic, technical, military and other assistance to the Republic of Korea." The principal objective of this policy is to strengthen that Government to the point where it can (1) success-



fully contain the threat of expanding Communist influence and control arising out of the existence in north Korea of an aggressive Soviet-dominated regime, and (2) serve as a nucleus for the eventual peaceful unification of the entire country on a democratic basis.

14. It can be assumed that under present circumstances the communists have the capability of dominating China. Communist domination of China is significant to the USSR primarily because it enhances USSR capabilities for obtaining Soviet objectives in Asia. Soviet ability to capitalize on the situation in China will depend on the degree of control that the Kremlin can exert over Chinese communist leaders, and on the control that the Chinese communists can exert over all elements of Chinese society. Development of these two varieties of control will not necessarily proceed in parallel. The formidable problems of overpopulation, limited and undeveloped natural resources, technical backwardness, and social and political lag which confront the Chinese communists have contributed to the downfall of every Chinese regime in recent history. Chinese communist success in surmounting their internal difficulties might well be accompanied by a lessening rather than an intensification of their subservience to the Kremlin. Similarly Chinese communist failure to achieve an effective solution of China's problems might drive the Chinese communists to depend more rather than less on the USSR. For the very immediate future it may be assumed that both Kremlin influence on the Chinese communists and Chinese communist control over China will grow more firm and that China will represent a political asset to the USSR in accomp-

lishment of its global objectives. But longer range development of Kremlin influence over the Chinese communists will be subject to the interplay of such presently unpredictable factors as Chinese communist effectiveness, USSR policy toward the Chinese communists, and the relations between the Chinese communists and the non-communist world. If the Kremlin should attempt to extend to China the pattern of political and economic control and exploitation that has characterized its relations with its European satellites, it is quite possible that serious frictions would develop between the Chinese communist regime and Moscow. Moreover, an attempt by the USSR to mobilize directly all Chinese resources in pursuance of its strategic objectives might well result in China's becoming more of a liability than an asset to the Soviet Union. The actions of the United States or of other Western powers cannot be expected greatly to weaken Chinese communist control of China in the foreseeable future, but may have influence on the relations between the Chinese communists and the USSR. In fact, any attempt on the part of the United States openly to deny Chinese territory such as Formosa to the communists would probably react to the benefit of the communists by rallying all the anti-foreign sentiment in China to their side.

15. Furthermore, action by the U. S. to occupy Formosa would inevitably expose the U. S. to charges of "imperialism" and seriously affect the moral position of the U. S. before the bar of world opinion, particularly in the Far East, at a time when the U. S. is seeking to expose Soviet imperialist designs on other nations. Such action would provide the Chinese communists with an irredentist



issue for their propaganda against the U. S. and a cause which would rally almost unanimous public sentiment behind them in China.

16. It is not believed that denial of Formosa to the Chinese communists can be achieved by any method short of actual U. S. military occupation. As a CIA intelligence estimate of October 19, 1949 (ORE 76-49, concurred in by the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Army, Navy and Air Force) states:

"Without major armed intervention, U. S. political, economic, and logistic support of the present Nationalist island regime cannot insure its indefinite survival as a non-communist base. Communist capabilities are such that only extended U. S. military occupation and control of Taiwan can prevent its eventual capture and subjugation by Chinese communist forces. Failing U. S. military occupation and control, a non-communist regime on Taiwan probably will succumb to the Chinese communists by the end of 1950."

17. In the light of the foregoing, and in view of the estimate of the JCS, reaffirmed in NSC 37/7 of August 22, 1949, that "the strategic importance of Formosa does not justify overt military action. . .", it is believed that U. S. military occupation of Formosa, which would require concurrent responsibility for the administration of the Island, would not be in the U. S. national interest.

18. On December 23, 1949, the Joint Chiefs of Staff stated that events which have taken place in China have not changed their above views (NSC 37/7, dated August 22, 1949). However, within these limitations, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that a modest, well-directed and closely supervised program of military advice and assistance to the anti-Communist government in Formosa would be in the security interest of the United States, and should be integrated with a stepped-up political, economic and psychological program



pursued energetically in extension of present United States programs there.

19. In south Asia we are favored by the fact that communist groups and leaders played a minor part in the nationalist movements of the area, which attained independence through a peaceful transfer of power by the British. The present south Asian governments are non-communist and, except in Burma, are maintaining law and order and have good prospects of remaining in power for the next few years. Soviet and Chinese communist hostility and internal communist opposition, on the one hand, and friendliness and circumspection on the part of the United States, the United Kingdom and the other Western powers, on the other, have during the past two years strengthened the Western orientation of the south Asian governments.

20. India and Pakistan, the pivotal nations of the area, inherited from the British well trained armies, a corps of experienced civil administrators, transport and communications facilities well developed by Asian standards, important agricultural and extractive industries, and a few large-scale processing and manufacturing industries. They, and Ceylon, remain within the Commonwealth and have significant military, economic and cultural ties with the United Kingdom--as does Burma which chose to leave the Commonwealth.

21. There are, unfortunately, adverse factors which threaten the continued relative stability of south Asia. Active disputes between India and Pakistan and between Pakistan and Afghanistan,

and suspicion of India in varying degree among its smaller neighbors at the minimum impede essential regional cooperation. At the unlikely maximum, they could embroil the area in war. Internally, all the governments of south Asia are faced with the necessity of bringing to their peoples within the next few years at least some hope of improved economic and social conditions. Failing this, they may lose control to extreme groups of the right or the left.

22. Consideration of the foregoing unfavorable aspects of the south Asian situation together with the current reluctance of the area to align itself overtly with any "power bloc" leads to the conclusion that it would be unwise for us to regard south Asia, more particularly India, as the sole bulwark against the extension of communist control in Asia. We should, however, recognize that the non-communist governments of the area already constitute a bulwark against communist expansion. We should accordingly exploit every opportunity to increase the present Western orientation of south Asia and to assist, within our capabilities, its non-communist governments in their efforts to meet the minimum aspirations of their people and to maintain (in the case of Burma to restore) internal security.

23. The current conflict between colonialism and native independence is the most important political factor in southeast Asia. This conflict results not only from the decay of European imperial power in the area but also from a widening political consciousness and the rise of militant nationalism among the subject peoples. With the exception of Thailand and the Philippines,



the southeast Asia countries do not possess leaders practiced in the exercise of responsible power. The question of whether a colonial country is fit to govern itself, however, is not always relevant in practical politics. The real issue would seem to be whether the colonial country is able and determined to make continued foreign rule an overall losing proposition for the metropolitan power. If it is, independence for the colonial country is the only practical solution, even though misgovernment eventuates. A solution of the consequent problem of instability, if it arises, must be sought on a non-imperialist plane. In any event, colonial-nationalist conflict provides a fertile field for subversive communist activities, and it is now clear that southeast Asia is the target of a coordinated offensive directed by the Kremlin. In seeking to gain control of southeast Asia, the Kremlin is motivated in part by a desire to acquire southeast Asia's resources and communication lines, and to deny them to us. But the political gains which would accrue to the USSR from communist capture of southeast Asia are equally significant. The extension of communist authority in China represents a grievous political defeat for us; if southeast Asia also is swept by communism we shall have suffered a major political rout the repercussions of which will be felt throughout the rest of the world, especially in the Middle East and in a then critically exposed Australia. The United States should continue to use its influence looking toward resolving the colonial nationalist conflict in such a way as to satisfy the fundamental demands of the nationalist-colonial conflict, lay the basis for



political stability and resistance to communism, and avoid weakening the colonial powers who are our western allies. However, it must be remembered that the long colonial tradition in Asia has left the peoples of that area suspicious of Western influence. We must approach the problem from the Asiatic point of view in so far as possible and should refrain from taking the lead in movements which must of necessity be of Asian origin. It will therefore be to our interest wherever possible to encourage the peoples of India, Pakistan, the Philippines and other Asian states to take the leadership in meeting the common problems of the area.

24. Although European influence has certainly declined throughout Asia and European powers are no longer able fully to shape the course of events in that part of the world, nevertheless the influence of such powers is by no means negligible. This is particularly true of the United Kingdom because of the advanced policies followed in Asia by that nation since the end of the war. With the successful conclusion of the Round Table talks at the Hague (for which this Government can claim preeminent credit) the Dutch will undoubtedly regain much of their lost popularity. It would be to the interest of the United States to make use of the skills, knowledge and long experience of our European friends and, to whatever extent may be possible, enlist their cooperation in measures designed to check the spread of USSR influence in Asia. If members of the British Commonwealth, particularly India, Pakistan, Australia and New Zealand, can be persuaded to join with the United Kingdom and the United States in carrying out constructive measures

of economic, political and cultural cooperation, the results will certainly be in our interest. Not only will the United States be able thus to relieve itself of part of the burden, but the cooperation of the white nations of the Commonwealth will arrest any potential dangers of the growth of a white-colored polarization.

25. With the rise of new nations and the decline of colonialism, a consciousness of common interests and a demand for regional collaboration is beginning to take form among the countries of Asia. However, the wide diversity of political organization and development, the lack of a tradition of cooperation and a sound economic basis for large-scale mutual trade, and the suspicions with which the weaker nations of Asia view the stronger, have all operated to delay the formation of any regional organization up to the present. But efforts continue and will probably increase in tempo as the advance of Soviet influence becomes more and more a direct threat. As stated above the peoples of Asia are suspicious of the West and in any cooperation the United States may extend to a developing regionalism it will be necessary to do nothing which would excite further suspicion of our motives. Asian leaders have already taken the initiative in this matter and it should continue to rest in their hands. There are many indications for example that India aspires to draw Ceylon, Burma and southeast Asia into a regional association. These aspirations are aided by the considerable moral influence which India enjoys throughout this area, derived from the great prestige of its revolutionary leaders and its position as the largest of the Asian dependencies to become independent of colonial



rule. India has gained additional goodwill by its strong support of the Indonesian independence movement. Prime Minister Nehru is, however, aware of the difficulties of creating an effective regional organization in south and southeast Asia, and is moving slowly and cautiously. He and other Indian leaders prefer that such an association develop from indigenous desires and would not look with favor upon attempts by outside powers to impose, or even too actively to foster, a regional organization of the area. United States interests would appear to demand that our sympathetic support be given to Asiatic leaders to the end that any regional association which may develop be one with which we could cooperate on equal terms and which would be in harmony with the UN Charter.

26. Asia is only one of several fronts on which the United States directly or indirectly confronts the USSR. Pressures, or lack of them, on any front affect all the others. The fortunate circumstance of occupying a favorable geographic position both in Europe and in Asia allows the USSR great flexibility in the pressures it may apply. Operating from the center of the Eurasian continent, it may advance or retreat in the east or in the west as the occasion demands. Because there is no longer a force either in Europe or Asia which can withstand without full United States assistance the power of the USSR if it should be unleashed, determination of the effective use of United States power, in its total sense, on any or all of its fronts with the USSR-European, Near Eastern, or Asiatic--requires decisions based upon a constant and skillful re-evaluation of the costs involved and the probable results to be



obtained in each case, both in the event of war and its probable aftermath, and in the event of continued peace. The United States for its part must be able to apply pressure on fronts at times of its own choosing rather than spreading itself thin in reacting to every threat posed by the Soviets if it is not to lose the advantages of the initiative in the struggle between the Soviet world and the free world. Mobilization of our cold war potential and implementation by effective techniques is essential.

27. United States ability to exert counter influence against the Kremlin in Asia rests on U. S. ability to provide economic assistance and cooperation to Asiatic countries; on preservation and development of the U. S. traditional reputation as a non-imperialistic champion of freedom and independence for all nations; on the frictions which will arise between Asiatic nationalisms and USSR imperialism; on U. S. cultural and philanthropic contacts in Asia; on U. S. ability to exert constructive influence on the European Far Eastern colonial powers and to gain assistance from these powers in the Far East; on U. S. military power, and on the U. S. strategic position in the Pacific. Appropriate development and utilization of these U. S. assets in Asia through effective diplomacy and propaganda will naturally increass the influence which the United States can now bring to bear to check the USSR in that area.

28. It must be remembered, however, that helping Asiatic countries to resist USSR pressure is not something we can do by our own policy alone. We will depend for success on interaction between

our  
policy and what already exists in the way of will and ability to resist on the part of the Asiatic countries themselves. It must also be borne in mind that the sweeping changes which have been taking place in Asia since the war have been stimulated in very considerable part by the determination of the peoples of Asia to control their own destinies and to redress the grievances of the past which they associate with foreign rule and foreign influence. Intervention in their affairs, particularly by the Western powers, however well-intentioned, will of itself be suspect and be likely to result in the undoing of the very interests which prompted the intervention. In the conflict between the U. S. and the USSR, the advantage in the long run in Asia is likely to rest with the side which succeeds in identifying its own cause with that of the Asian peoples and which succeeds in working in harmony with the dominant motivating forces in Asia today and in influencing these forces rather than attempting by direct or impatient methods to control them.

## Strategic Considerations

29. The potential power of Asia is strategically significant both to the United States and to the USSR because of its capacity in the long run to affect the relative military strength of these two countries and hence the character of military operations in the event of war between them. Translation of the Asian power potential into military strength would require development of each of its elements--organization and training of manpower, exploitation of natural resources, development of sea transportation, improvement of communications and further industrialization--as well as their integration toward coordinated objectives. Even given the most favorable atmosphere for development, including the power to consolidate as necessary, the authority to divert channels of trade, and the military force required to protect long sea routes and other lines of communication--the full development of Asia's potential power is a long-term affair. In the power potential of Asia, Japan plays the most important part by reason of its industrious, aggressive population, providing a large pool of trained manpower, its integrated internal communications system with a demonstrated potential for an efficient merchant marine, its already developed industrial base and its strategic position. Because of Japan's economic importance in Asia, of the extreme vulnerability of Japan to blockade, of the long period required under the best of circumstances for the development of significant strategic potential in Asia, and of the hazards involved in attempts to harness Chinese potential to Soviet ends, there exists no serious danger that the USSR will in the near future be able to undertake military aggression based on Asia's strategic potential.



30. The location of Asia, contiguous to the USSR and separated from the United States, presents different strategic implications, both offensive and defensive, to the United States and to the USSR. The Asian power potential is more valuable to Russia than to the United States, since American industrial power is so much greater than Russian. The industrial plant of Japan would be the richest strategic prize in the Far East for the USSR. For Japan and major Asian raw-material producing areas, together with the necessary transportation lines, to be controlled by the Soviet Union would add measurably to the war-making potential of the USSR. Russia could not, however, quickly build up a powerful self-sufficient war-making complex in Asia without access to and control over Japan and could not effectively mobilize Japan in war without a larger merchant fleet in the Pacific than the USSR and Japan are likely to have for years to come. Other Asiatic assets of potential value to Russia include soybeans, tin, rubber, and South China's tungsten. Petroleum, coming from Indonesia including Borneo, while not essential to meet Russian domestic requirements, is one of the most important strategic materials in the region.

31. The strategic value of Asia to the United States rests on three considerations: In the first place denial of USSR control over Asia might prevent the acquisition by the Soviets of elements of power which might in time add significantly to the Russian war-making potential. Secondly, to the degree that Asian indigenous forces develop opposition to the expansion of USSR influence, they would assist the U. S. in containing Soviet control and influence in the area,

possibly reducing the drain on the United States economy. The indigenous forces of Asia, including manpower reserves, would also be a valuable asset, if available for the support of the United States in the event of war. Thirdly, Asia is a source of numerous raw materials, principally tin and natural rubber, which are of strategic importance to the United States, although the United States could, as in World War II, rely on other sources if necessary.

32. Since, from the military point of view, the primary strategic interests and war objectives of the United States consistent with the aim of destruction of the enemy's means to wage war are not now in Asia, the current basic concept of strategy in the event of war with the USSR is to conduct a strategic offense in the "West" and a strategic defense in the "East". In keeping with this basic concept and in light of the strategic interests of the United States and the USSR as developed above, certain principles may be stated. As a primary matter in the event of war, it is essential that a successful strategic defense in the "East" be assured with a minimum expenditure of military manpower and material in order that the major effort may be expended in the "West". In order to gain freedom of access to the Asian continent within these limitations, the United States must now concentrate its efforts on bringing to bear such power as can be made available, short of the commitment of United States military forces, in those areas which will show the most results in return for the United States effort expended. In addition the United States must maintain a strategic position which will facilitate control of coastal and overseas lines of communication in Asia.



33. From the military point of view, the United States must maintain a minimum position in Asia if a successful defense is to be achieved against future Soviet aggression. This minimum position is considered to consist of at least our present military position in the Asian offshore island chain, and in the event of war its denial to the Communists. The chain represents our first line of defense and in addition, our first line of offense from which we may seek to reduce the area of Communist control, using whatever means we can develop, without, however, using sizeable United States armed forces. The first line of strategic defense should include Japan, the Ryukyus, and the Philippines. This minimum position will permit control of the main lines of communication necessary to United States strategic development of the important sections of the Asian area.

#### Economic Considerations

34. Except for industrialization in Japan and to a lesser extent in India, Asia is basically an agricultural region. Pressure of population on the land has depressed living standards to the margin of subsistence. Communications and transportation facilities are poor and productivity is low. However, Asia is the source of important raw and semi-processed materials, many of them of strategic value. Moreover, in the past, Asia has been a market for the processed goods of industrialized states, and has also been for the western colonial powers a rich source of revenue from investments and other invisible earnings.

35. The United States has an interest in the attainment by the free peoples of Asia of that degree of economic recovery and develop-



ment needed as a foundation for social and political stability. This interest stems from the principle that a viable economy is essential to the survival of independent states. In the two major non-Communist countries of this area, India and Japan, U. S. aid (direct in the case of Japan, and via convertible sterling releases in the case of India) is averting a deterioration in economic conditions that would otherwise threaten political stability. While scrupulously avoiding assumption of responsibility for raising Asiatic living standards, it is to the U. S. interest to promote the ability of these countries to maintain, on a self-supporting basis, the economic conditions prerequisite to political stability. Japan can only maintain its present living standard on a self-supporting basis if it is able to secure a greater proportion of its<sup>needed</sup>/food and raw material (principally cotton) imports from the Asiatic area, in which its natural markets lie, rather than from the U. S., in which its export market is small. In view of the desirability of avoiding preponderant dependence on Chinese sources, and the limited availability of supplies from pre-war sources in Korea and Formosa, this will require a considerable increase in Southern Asiatic food and raw material exports.

36. The Indian problem is somewhat analogous: The sizeable post-war Indian dollar deficit may be traced largely to this country's unprecedented dollar food imports. These imports have been necessitated by the failure of Indian food production to keep pace with population growth and to the reduced post-war availability of food exports from India's soft currency suppliers in Southern Asia. Even with these significant dollar food imports, Indian food con-

sumption has fallen below pre-war levels. A further decline would almost certainly produce serious political instability in the major cities of India. A serious problem would thus result if the U. K. were no longer able to bear the burden of the convertible sterling releases that have so far met the Indian dollar deficit.

37. It is thus difficult to foresee a time at which Japan and India will be self-supporting in the absence of greatly increased food production and some increased cotton production in Southern and Southeast Asia. One major prerequisite to such an increase is the restoration of political stability in the food exporting countries of Burma and Indo China. Given such a restoration, perhaps as much as 2.5 million more tons of rice exports could be secured from these countries with only minimal loans for rehabilitation of damaged facilities, e.g., transportation. Another major prerequisite is expanded agricultural development in the stable Southern Asiatic countries in which such development would be economic: India, Pakistan -- which exports wheat and cotton, Thailand -- which exports rice, and Ceylon -- whose sizeable rice imports reduce the availability of Asiatic foodstuffs to India and Japan. Japanese and Indian food requirements, and Japanese cotton requirements, could be met if certain projected irrigation, reclamation, and transportation projects were executed in the above countries.

38. These projects will probably require: (i) a more effective mobilization of local resources by the governments concerned, (ii) some external technical aid, (iii) some limited external financial aid. Most of the countries in question are now taking steps to



mobilize local resources more effectively in the agricultural field, and they should be encouraged along these lines. External technical aid should be made available under the Point IV program. The external financial aid required is of such a limited character that it can probably be adequately provided by the International Bank and the Export-Import Bank. We should, therefore, continue to urge these institutions to give serious consideration to requests for loans to finance sound development projects that would increase agricultural production in India, Thailand, Pakistan and Ceylon. This encouragement should, of course, be without prejudice to other additional loans these institutions may wish to make for non-agricultural purposes to these countries.

39. Expanded agricultural development in Southern and Southeast Asia would make a contribution to the political stability and the welfare of the exporting, as well as the importing countries. Through increased sales of rice, wheat, and cotton, Thailand and Pakistan could most economically secure the imports of capital and consumer goods to develop and diversify their economies. A comparable effect would be felt in India and Ceylon, if increased food production enabled these countries to reduce the disproportionate amount of foreign exchange that they presently devote to the purchase of food imports.

40. Our interest in a viable economy in the non-Communist countries of Asia would be advanced by increased trade among such countries. Japanese and Indian industrial revival and development can contribute to enlarged intra-regional trade relations which suffered



a set-back because of the economic vacuum resulting from the defeat of Japan, the devastation caused by the war in other areas and the interference and restrictions arising from extensive governmental controls. Given a favorable and secure atmosphere--plus adequate freedom to individual traders, readily available working capital, suitable commercial agreements establishing conditions favorable to commerce and navigation and general assistance in the promotion of trade--it is expected that a substantial increase in intra-Asia trade can occur. The patterns of such trade, however, may differ from those existing before the war. In any event, a strong trading area among the free countries of Asia would add to general economic development and strengthen social and political stability. Some kind of regional association, facilitating interchange of information, among the non-Communist countries of Asia might become an important means of developing a favorable atmosphere for such trade among themselves and with other parts of the world..

41. Asia, particularly South and Southeast Asia, are among the principal sources of United States imports of several basic commodities which could contribute greatly to United States security for stockpiling purposes and would be of great assistance in time of war if they remained available to us. Exports to Asia from the United States are of less importance than are imports, but are not now insignificant and could grow in importance to the stability of our own domestic economy. In brief, the economic advantage derived by the United States from our trade with non-Communist Asia is considerable and there is little doubt of the wisdom of its development.

42. One effective means available to the United States for assisting in economic development, particularly in Southeast Asia, is to enlarge, consistent with security considerations, and despite possible objections of U. S. competitors, the orderly and sustained procurement, both by private and public agencies, of strategic and other basic commodities, such as tin, hard fibers and particularly natural rubber. United States purchases of strategic materials on current account would represent an important source of dollars for use by Asian countries in and outside the sterling area in meeting their current and capital needs.

43. The USSR is the primary target of those U. S. economic policies designed to contain or turn back Soviet-Communist imperialism, and not China or any of the Soviet satellites considered as individual countries. It would, therefore, be inappropriate to apply to the willing or unwilling partners of the USSR punitive or restrictive economic measures which are not being applied to the USSR itself. This guiding principle should be the point of departure in application of procedures for conduct of our economic relations with Communist China. It should be our objective to take steps to prevent the Soviets and their satellites from obtaining, via trans-shipment in the Far East, strategic goods now denied them through direct channels. It should also be our objective to prevent Chinese Communists from obtaining supplies of goods of direct military utility which might be used to threaten directly the security interests of the western powers in Asia. It is not, however, either necessary or advisable to restrict trade with China in goods which are destined for normal civil-



ian. uses within China provided safeguards are established to accomplish the two objectives mentioned above. Three reasons exist for this position: (1) Japan's economy cannot possibly be restored to a self-sustaining basis without a considerable volume of trade with China, the burden of Japan on the United States economy cannot be removed unless Japan's economy is restored to a self-sustaining basis and U. S. interference with natural Japanese trade relations with China would produce profound Japanese hostility; (2) permitting trade with Communist China in goods destined for normal civilian end uses within China will enable us to obtain quantities of important commodities needed by the U. S. (e.g., tung oil, bristles, tungsten, antimony, etc.) and might contribute to internal economic and political tensions between the urban and rural sectors of the Chinese economy, and permit China to choose between a Soviet and a Western orientation in their foreign economic relations; and (3) restriction of trade for any purpose other than those indicated by the objectives outlined above would be ineffective and impractical in view of the existence of alternative sources of supply in other countries which will not cooperate in export controls affecting normal trade with China. The U. S. should seek the cooperation of friendly countries in exercising export controls to achieve the objectives indicated, and request SCAP to conform to our general policy in this respect. While SCAP should be requested to avoid preponderant dependence on Chinese markets and sources of supply he should not be expected to apply controls upon Japan's trade with China more restrictive than those applied by Western European countries in their trade with China. At the same time,



SCAP should encourage development of alternative Japanese markets elsewhere in the world, including Southern and Southeast Asia, on an economic basis. Notwithstanding the advantages of the permissive trade policy outlined above, there would be no advantage for the United States to extend governmental economic assistance to or encourage private investment in Communist China.

### CONCLUSIONS

44. Our basic security objectives with respect to Asia are:

a. Development of the nations and peoples of Asia on a stable and self-sustaining basis in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

b. Gradual reduction and eventual elimination of the preponderant power and influence of the USSR in Asia to such a degree that the Soviet Union will not be capable of threatening from that area the security of the United States or its friends and that the Soviet Union would encounter serious obstacles should it attempt to threaten the peace, national independence and stability of the Asiatic nations.

c. Prevention of power relationships in Asia which would enable any other nation or alliance to threaten the security of the United States from that area, or the peace, national independence and stability of the Asiatic nations.

45. In pursuit of these objectives, the United States must encourage non-Communist forces to take the initiative in Asia, must exert an influence to advance its own national interests and must take

December 30, 1949

NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

on

THE POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES WITH RESPECT TO ASIA

Reference: NSC 48/1

At its 50th Meeting, with the President presiding, the National Security Council, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Acting Secretary of Commerce, and the Acting Economic Cooperation Administrator, discussed a report on "The Position of the United States with Respect to Asia" (NSC 48/1), and adopted the Conclusions contained therein subject to amendments at the meeting and to further amendments subsequently agreed upon by the Departments of State and Defense. The Conclusions as revised are enclosed herewith.

The National Security Council, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Acting Secretary of Commerce, and the Acting Economic Cooperation Administrator, recommend that the President approve the Conclusions contained herein and direct their implementation by all appropriate Executive Departments and Agencies of the U. S. Government under the coordination of the Secretary of State.

SIDNEY W. SOUERS  
Executive Secretary

cc: The Secretary of the Treasury  
The Secretary of Commerce  
The Economic Cooperation Administrator

REPORT BY THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

on

THE POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES WITH RESPECT TO ASIA

CONCLUSIONS

1. Our basic security objectives with respect to Asia\* are:

a. Development of the nations and peoples of Asia on a stable and self-sustaining basis in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

b. Development of sufficient military power in selected non-Communist nations of Asia to maintain internal security and to prevent further encroachment by communism.

c. Gradual reduction and eventual elimination of the preponderant power and influence of the USSR in Asia to such a degree that the Soviet Union will not be capable of threatening from that area the security of the United States or its friends and that the Soviet Union would encounter serious obstacles should it attempt to threaten the peace, national independence and stability of the Asiatic nations.

d. Prevention of power relationships in Asia which would enable any other nation or alliance to threaten the security of the United States from that area, or the peace, national independence and stability of the Asiatic nations.

2. In pursuit of these objectives, the United States should act to:

a. Support non-Communist forces in taking the initiative in Asia;

b. Exert an influence to advance its own national interests; and

c. Initiate action in such a manner as will appeal to the Asiatic nations as being compatible with their national interests and worthy of their support.

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\* For the purposes of this report "Asia" is defined as that part of the continent of Asia south of the USSR and east of Iran together with the major off-shore islands--Japan, Formosa, the Philippines, Indonesia and Ceylon.



3. As the basis for realization of its objectives, the United States should pursue a policy toward Asia containing the following components:

a. The United States should make known its sympathy with the efforts of Asian leaders to form regional associations of non-Communist states of the various Asian areas, and if in due course associations eventuate, the United States should be prepared, if invited, to assist such associations to fulfill their purposes under conditions which would be to our interest. The following principles should guide our actions in this respect:

(1) Any association formed must be the result of a genuine desire on the part of the participating nations to cooperate for mutual benefit in solving the political, economic, social and cultural problems of the area.

(2) The United States must not take such an active part in the early stages of the formation of such an association that it will be subject to the charge of using the Asiatic nations to further United States ambitions.

(3) The association, if it is to be a constructive force, must operate on the basis of mutual aid and self-help in all fields so that a true partnership may exist based on equal rights and equal obligations.

(4) United States participation in any stage of the development of such an association should be with a view to accomplishing our basic objectives in Asia and to assuring that any association formed will be in accord with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations dealing with regional arrangements.

b. The United States should act to develop and strengthen the security of the area from Communist external aggression or internal subversion. These steps should take into account any benefits to the security of Asia which may flow from the development of one or more regional groupings. The United States on its own initiative should now:

(1) Improve the United States position with respect to Japan, the Ryukyus and the Philippines.

(2) Scrutinize closely the development of threats from Communist aggression, direct or indirect, and be prepared to help within our means to meet such threats by providing political, economic, and military assistance and advice where clearly needed to supplement the resistance of the other governments in and out of the area which are more directly concerned.

(3) Develop cooperative measures through multilateral or bilateral arrangements to combat Communist internal subversion.

(4) Appraise the desirability and the means of developing in Asia some form of collective security arrangements, bearing in mind the following considerations:

(a) The reluctance of India at this time to join in any anti-Communist security pact and the influence this will have among the other nations of Asia.

(b) The necessity of assuming that any collective security arrangements which might be developed be based on the principle of mutual aid and on a demonstrated desire and ability to share in the burden by all the participating states.

(c) The necessity of assuring that any such security arrangements would be consonant with the purposes of any regional association which may be formed in accordance with paragraph 3-a above.

(d) The necessity of assuring that any such security arrangement would be in conformity with the provisions of Article 51 of the Charter relating to individual and collective self-defense.

c. The United States should encourage the creation of an atmosphere favorable to economic recovery and development in non-Communist Asia, and to the revival of trade along multilateral, non-discriminatory lines. The economic policies of the United States should be adapted to promote, where possible, economic conditions that will contribute to political stability in friendly countries of Asia, but the United States should carefully avoid assuming responsibility for the economic welfare and development of that continent. Such policies might be projected along the following lines:

(1) Vigorous prosecution of the Point IV program in friendly countries of Asia, in an endeavor to assist them, by providing technical assistance, to make a start toward the solution of some of their long-range economic problems.

(2) Maintenance of a liberal United States trade policy with Asia and stimulation of imports from Asia. The special problems concerning trade with China are treated in paragraph 3-f-(4) below.

(3) Execution of a stockpiling program for strategic materials, based upon United States needs for strategic



reserves and upon immediate and long-range economic effects in the supplying countries.

(4) Negotiation of treaties of friendship, commerce and navigation with non-Communist countries of Asia to define and establish conditions facilitating capital movements, trade and other economic relations between them and the United States.

(5) Encouragement of private United States investment in non-Communist countries and support of the early extension of credits by the International Bank and the Export-Import Bank for specific key economic projects of a self-liquidating nature, especially those directed towards increasing production of food in this area.

(6) Efforts to obtain the adherence of Asiatic countries to the principles of multilateral, non-discriminatory trade as embodied in the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade, as a means of reducing trade barriers and expanding the international and intra-regional trade of the region on an economic basis. This would include, for example, further efforts to secure the benefits of most-favored-nation treatment for Japan.

d. The question of a peace settlement with Japan, now receiving separate consideration, will be presented for the consideration of the National Security Council at a later date and policies with respect to Japan will be re-evaluated after the decision regarding a peace treaty has been made.

e. (1) The United States should continue to provide for the extension of political support and economic, technical, military and other assistance to the democratically-elected Government of the Republic of Korea.\*

(2) The United States should therefore press forward with the implementation of the ECA, MDAP, USIE and related programs for Korea, and should continue to accord political support to the Republic of Korea, both within and without the framework of the United Nations.

f. (1) The United States should continue to recognize the National Government of China until the situation is further clarified.\*\* The United States should avoid recognizing the Chinese Communist regime until it is clearly in the United States interest to do so. The United States should continue

\* NSC 8/2, approved March 23, 1949.

\*\* NSC 34/2.



to express to friendly governments its own views concerning the dangers of hasty recognition of the Chinese Communist regime but should not take a stand which would engage the prestige of the United States in an attempt to prevent such recognition. In general, however, it should be realized that it would be inappropriate for the United States to adopt a posture more hostile or policies more harsh towards a Communist China than towards the USSR itself. It should also be realized that the according of recognition by other friendly countries would affect the bargaining position of the United States in the absence of United States recognition and would affect United States private and national interests in China. In the event that recognition of the Chinese Communists is anticipated, appropriate steps should be taken to make it clear that recognition should not be construed as approval of the Chinese Communist regime, or abatement of our hostility to Soviet efforts to exercise control in China.

(2) The United States should continue the policies of avoiding military and political support of any non-Communist elements in China unless such elements are willing actively to resist Communism with or without United States aid and unless such support would mean reasonable resistance to the Communists and contribute to the over-all national interests of the United States.\* In determining whether or in what manner any such assistance or encouragement should be given, consideration would have to be given to the protection which Chinese Communist authorities, as they become generally recognized by other governments, would be able to claim under international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The United States should maintain so far as feasible active contact with all elements in China and maintain our cultural and informational program at the most active feasible level.

(3) The United States should exploit, through appropriate political, psychological and economic means, any rifts between the Chinese Communists and the USSR and between the Stalinists and other elements in China, while scrupulously avoiding the appearance of intervention. Where appropriate, covert as well as overt means should be utilized to achieve these objectives.\*

(4) The United States should, as a security measure, seek to prevent the USSR, its European satellites, and North Korea from obtaining from abroad through China supplies of strategic materials and equipment which are currently denied them by the United States and its European allies through

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\* NSC 34/2.



direct channels. The United States should also use every effort to prevent the Chinese Communists from obtaining from non-Soviet sources supplies of materials and equipment of direct military utility (1A items). The United States should, on the other hand, permit exports to China of 1B items within quantitative limits of normal civilian use and under controls which can be applied restrictively if it becomes necessary to do so in the national interest, and should place no obstacle in the way of trade with China in non-strategic commodities. The United States should seek the support and concurrence of its principal European allies in these policies. The United States should not extend governmental economic assistance to Communist China or encourage private investment in Communist China.

g. (1) The United States should continue the policy set forth in NSC 37/2 and 37/5 of attempting to deny Formosa and the Pescadores to the Chinese Communists through diplomatic and economic means within the limitations imposed by the fact that successful achievement of this objective will primarily depend on prompt initiation and faithful implementation of essential measures of self-help by the non-Communist administration of the islands, and by the fact that freedom of U. S. diplomatic and economic action will be influenced, necessarily, by action taken by other countries.

(2) Since the United States may not be able to achieve its objectives through political and economic means, and in view of the opinion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (reaffirmed in NSC 37/7 of August 22, 1949) that, while Formosa is strategically important to the United States, "the strategic importance of Formosa does not justify overt military action ....so long as the present disparity between our military strength and our global obligations exists", the United States should make every effort to strengthen the over-all U. S. position with respect to the Philippines, the Ryukyus, and Japan. The United States should, for example, proceed apace with implementation of the policy set forth in regard to the Ryukyus in paragraph 5 of NSC 13/3.

h. The United States should continue to use its influence in Asia toward resolving the colonial-nationalist conflict in such a way as to satisfy the fundamental demands of the nationalist movement while at the same time minimizing the strain on the colonial powers who are our Western allies. Particular attention should be given to the problem of French Indo-China and action should be taken to bring home to the French the urgency of removing the barriers to the obtaining by Bao Dai or other non-Communist nationalist leaders of the support of a substantial proportion of the Vietnamese. With the successful conclusion of the Round Table Conference at The Hague the United

States should give immediate consideration to the problems confronting the new Republic of United Indonesia and how best it can be aided in maintaining its freedom in the face of internal and external Communist pressures.

i. Active consideration should be given to means by which all members of the British Commonwealth may be induced to play a more active role in collaboration with the United States in Asia. Similar collaboration should be obtained to the extent possible from other non-Communist nations having interests in Asia.

j. Recognizing that the non-Communist governments of South Asia already constitute a bulwark against Communist expansion in Asia, the United States should exploit every opportunity to increase the present Western orientation of the area and to assist, within our capabilities, its governments in their efforts to meet the minimum aspirations of their people and to maintain internal security.

k. The United States should undertake an information program, both foreign and domestic, and publish United States policies and programs vis-a-vis Asia designed to gain maximum support both at home and abroad.

l. Nothing in this paper shall be construed as amending approved NSC papers unless a specific statement to that effect has been made on each point.

m. The sum of \$75,000,000 for assistance to the general area of China, which was made available under Section 303 of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949, should be programmed as a matter of urgency.





# UNITED STATES - VIETNAM RELATIONS

## 1945 - 1967

V.B.2.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE WAR  
- INTERNAL COMMITMENTS -

The Truman Administration, 1945-1952

BOOK II - 1950-1952

# JUSTIFICATION OF THE WAR -- INTERNAL COMMITMENTS

The Truman Administration, 1945 - 1952

## Foreword

This portion of the study consists of a collection of U.S. Government documents which set forth the rationale of U.S. policy toward Vietnam. The collection represents the internal commitment of the U.S. as expressed in classified documents circulated at the highest levels in the government. The documents are organized chronologically within each Presidential administration. This volume covers the Truman years, 1945 - 1952.

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89. U.S. believes "nothing should be left undone which will strengthen truly nationalist groups" in the steadily deteriorating Indochina situation. Marshall 3368 to Saigon, 30 August 1948..... 140
90. The U.S. publicly recognizes major strategem of communists in Southeast Asia is to champion the cause of local nationalism. Lovett 149 to Saigon, 22 September 1948..... 141
91. U.S. policy statement on Indochina cites four long-term objectives in Indochina: (1) eliminate communist influence, (2) foster association of the people with Western powers, particularly France, (3) raise the standard of living, and (4) to prevent undue Chinese penetration. The immediate objective is to satisfactorily resolve the French-Vietnamese impasse. Department of State Policy Statement on Indochina, 27 September 1948..... 143
92. The U.S. view is that for Moscow "prospects are excellent that Ho Chi Minh will eventually force the withdrawal of the French and set up the first 'New Democratic Republic' in Southeast Asia." Abbot (Saigon) despatch No. 195 to SecState, 5 November 1948..... 150

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93. The U.S., in assessing Bao Dai, cannot "irretrievably commit U.S. to support of native government which... might become virtually puppet govt..." Lovett (Acting SecState) 145 to Paris, 17 January 1949..... 152
94. The U.S. cautiously avoids any premature endorsement of Bao Dai in order to retain freedom of action in face of French pessimism. Acheson (SecState) 70 to Saigon, 2 May 1949..... 153
95. Abbot, Saigon Consul, reviews the entire Indochina situation (for the New Delhi Foreign Service Conference, February 1949) for the State Department. "The alternatives to the Bao Dai solution are either continued costly colonial warfare or French withdrawal leaving a communist-controlled government in a strategic area of Southeast Asia." Abbott despatch 93 to SecState, 5 May 1949..... 154
96. The U.S. desires the success of Bao Dai experiment and will extend recognition, as there appears no other alternative to the established communist pattern in Vietnam and possible communist success in China. Acheson 77 to Saigon, 10 May 1949..... 190
97. U.S. fears France is offering "too little too late" and the U.S. should avoid "a conspicuous position" of any kind. Acheson 83 to Saigon, 20 May 1949..... 193
98. The U.S. feels that the question of Ho Chi Minh's nationalism versus communism is "irrelevant." "All Stalinists in colonial areas are nationalists." Acheson 14 to Hanoi, 20 May 1949..... 196
99. The U.S. submits comments on the 8 March Franco-Bao Dai agreement to France. Essentially, the U.S., while hoping the 8 March agreements would succeed, is pessimistic that the requisite concessions will be made by France. Butterworth, FEA, letter 289 to Bruce (Paris), 6 June 1949..... 200
100. Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson requests the National Security Council to study the Asian situation to re-examine current policy. "The advance of communism in large areas of the world and particularly the successes of communism in China seriously affect the future security of the United States." Johnson Memo to NSC, 10 June 1949..... 217



101. The U.S. regards establishment of Bao Dai as only the "first step" in the evolution of the Vietnam problem and that France will have to concede more to accommodate nationalists.. Webb (Acting) 145 to Rangoon, 20 June 1949..... 219
102. The Singapore Conference recommends that the U.S. join the UK in support of Bao Dai, that the French clarify Vietnam's legal status, that de facto recognition be granted on 1 January 1950, and hopes that the U.S. would fulfill its UN duties in event of an attack on Indochina. Bliss (London) A2063 to SecState, 9 November 1949..... 223
103. The National Security Council submits a report, "The Position of the United States with Respect to Asia," which, from a military view, indicates the "current basic concept of strategic offense in the 'West' and a strategic defense in the 'East.' The importance of Southeast Asia is principally as an exporter of strategic materials -- tin, fibers, and rubber." NSC 48/1, 23 December 1949..... 225
104. The President approves the conclusions of NSC 48/1 as amended. The basic objectives cited are -- development of stable nations and sufficient military power to prevent communist expansion in Asia, reduction of USSR influence in Asia, and prevention of power relationships which could threaten the U.S. Specifically, in Indochina, the U.S. will use its influence to resolve the colonialist-nationalist conflict. NSC 48/2, 30 December 1949..... 225

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105. The JCS reviews the current Mutual Defense Assistance Program and certain objectives evolve as the basis for future military assistance programs. A specific long range objective is "development of sufficient military power in selected nations of the Far East" to prevent encroachment by communism. JCS Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, 26 January 1950..... 273
106. The State Department recommends and President Truman approves recognition of the three legally constituted governments of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Memorandum for the President, 2 February 1950..... 276
107. The U.S. forwards the letters of recognition to the Associated States and requests a reply to the suggestion on exchange of diplomatic representatives. Acheson 59 to Saigon, 4 February 1950..... 278



108. Asiatic neighbors consider Bao Dai a French puppet. The U.S. should realize that ECA and military aid from the U. S. do not constitute decisive factors in Indochina's problems. Therefore the Griffin Mission should not commit ECA or military aid to French Indochina unless France "gives requisite public undertakings re further steps leading to status similar to Indonesia." Stanton (Bangkok) 160 to Acheson, 17 February 1950..... 280
109. The State Department submits to the NSC a report on "The Position of the United States with Respect to Indochina," which analyzes the problem to determine measures to protect U.S. security in Indochina and prevent communist expansion in the area. NSC No. 64, 27 February 1950..... 282
110. President Truman approves the designation of Mr. Robert A. Griffin as Chief of the Economic Survey Mission to Southeast Asia, with rank of Minister. Five basic objectives of the Mission are outlined: (1) determine needed projects of political significance; (2) prepare for Point 4 programs; (3) advise local officials of methods and extent of participation in Point 4; (4) brief U.S. representatives; and (5) investigate regional aspects of technical assistance. Department of State letter to Griffin, 1 March 1950..... 286
111. The State Department maintains to the Department of Defense that Indochina is subject to immediate danger and is the "most strategically important area of Southeast Asia." Dean Rusk believes that the resources of the U. S. should be deployed to "reserve Indochina from further Communist encroachment." Dean Rusk, Deputy Undersecretary of State to General James H. Burns, Defense Representative to Southeast Asia Aid Committee, 7 March 1950..... 288
112. Acheson instructs Saigon, in light of anticipated Franco-Viet friction on handling U.S. aid, that function of Griffin Mission is "clearly understood to be fact finding." Acheson 136 to Saigon, 9 March 1950..... 289
113. Griffin replies that "I understand that ours is an economic aid mission" and that the budding controversy could jeopardize the economic aid program. The French show no enthusiasm for Point 4. Gullion (Saigon) 176 to Acheson, 13 March 1950..... 290
114. Griffin submits his mission's preliminary conclusions on Indochina with a listing of specific urgent programs totaling \$23.5 million exclusive of military aid and indirect

- U.S. aid (e.g., through France). Obstacles should not permit indecision to allocate aid money or materials; the "crux of the situation lies in prompt decisive action if desired political effect is to be attained." Griffin file copy of telegram sent to Acheson, 16 March 1950..... 292
115. The U.S. assumes that France is determined to protect Indochina from communist encroachment, that success depends on indigenous support, and that France supports Bao Dai, but that the French position and ultimate intentions are not clear to the rest of the world. The U.S. requests France to make a public statement of the concessions to Indochinese nationalism. Acheson 1363 to Paris, 29 March 1950..... 301
116. Acheson advises Griffin Mission of the implications for U.S. policy in Vietnam: (1) The prospect of U.S. aid indirectly would cause crisis (induce hyper-confidence in Viets); (2) Viets bitter at Huu appointment (and the U.S.) may magnify the U.S. role; (3) it is better for the U.S. if a national union government is set up; and (4) the aid program can more easily be worked out with Huu Government. Acheson 244 to Griffin, 9 April 1950..... 305
117. Department of State requests an assessment of the strategic aspects of Indochina from a military point of view because of the threat of communist domination. The Joint Chiefs of Staff indicate that the "mainland states of Southeast Asia also are at present of critical strategic importance to the United States," because of the requirement to stockpile strategic materials acquired there, as well as the threat to other states on the "line of containment." JCS Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, 10 April 1950..... 308
118. The Joint Chiefs of Staff concur with the State Department on the importance of Southeast Asia to the U.S. However, the JCS urge a more forceful and positive U.S. position than expressed by State -- "...in order to retrieve the losses resulting from previous mistakes on the part of the British and French, as well as to preclude such mistakes in the future, the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider it necessary that positive and proper leadership among the Western Powers be assumed by the United States in Southeast Asia matters." JCS Memorandum for SecDef, 2 May 1950..... 315
119. The JCS recommend telling the French that the U.S. is prepared to assist France and the three Associated States and that arrangements for U.S. military aid be made. JCS Memorandum for SecDef, 2 May 1950..... 318



120.	President Truman approves \$10 million for military items to Indochina. Acheson 2049 to London, 3 May 1950.....	321
121.	Griffin reconstructs the Indochina situation for Secretary Acheson. Griffin indicates that the present status quo cannot be maintained. "Time is of the essence...." if Bao Dai starts to slip, "it will be impossible to restore him." Given that the French are aware that a military solution is unattainable, "the U.S. must find out what the French expect of Vietnam." Griffin Memorandum to Secretary of State, 4 May 1950.....	322
122.	The special survey mission headed by R. Allen Griffin recommends a modest \$60 million economic and technical assistance program for Southeast Asia. State press release 485, 11 May 1950.....	327
123.	The Ministers of the U.S., U.K., and France agree that while Southeast Asia is of strategic importance to the U.S., the direct responsibilities of U.K. and France make it of greater concern to them. Extract of Tripartite Ministerial Talks, 13 May 1950.....	328
124.	The French affirm responsibility for Indochina, acknowledge "supplementary" U.S. assistance, and assure that 8 March agreements would be "liberally implemented." London - SECTO 256, 14 May 1950.....	330
125.	U.S. formally announces intent to establish an economic aid mission to the three Associated States of Indochina. State press release 545, 25 May 1950.....	332
126.	On the basis of the Griffin recommendations, the U.S. publicly announces the launching of a program of rapid economic aid to Southeast Asia. Secretary of State Dean Acheson letter to R. Allen Griffin, 3 June 1950.....	335
127.	North Korea attacks South Korea and President Truman announces U.S. military assistance not only to South Korea but also an "acceleration in the furnishing of military assistance to the forces of France and the Associated States in Indochina and the dispatch of a military mission...." Presidential Statement, 27 June 1950.....	336
128.	The U.S. clarifies the principles governing U.S. military aid to Indochina. Essentially, the basic principles are: U.S. aid supplements French assistance to Associated States	



- to achieve internal security; assist army of the French Union against communist aggression; Korean events could cause diversion of aid from Associated States. Acheson 4 to Saigon, 1 July 1950..... 338
129. A summary of existing policy on Indochina reveals the JCS view on NSC 73 that the U.S. give consideration to providing air and naval assistance should the Chinese provide overt support to the Viet Minh. Consultants' Meeting, 25 July 1950..... 341
130. The U.S. feels that French requests for overall assistance (military, economic, and political) are inadequate to "consummate U.S. broad objectives in Indochina" and assistance will have to be increased to resist encroachment of communism. Heath (Saigon) 170 to Acheson, 7 August 1950.... 343
131. The U.S. views growing political and military deterioration in Indochina with concern; especially evident are failure of the government to gain support, disinclination of Bao Dai to assume leadership role, and indications of CHICOM-Viet Minh military collaboration. The U.S. seeks to have Vietnam establish a national army and declare a national emergency. Acheson 238 to Saigon, 1 September 1950..... 344
132. The U.S. informs France that the U.S. was prepared to increase assistance to French Union forces but could not furnish money for local use or direct tactical air support. Extract of Summary Minutes of Tripartite, Foreign Ministers Meeting, France, U.K., and U.S., 14 September 1950..... 347
133. The Southeast Asia Aid Policy Committee (SEAC) proposes a statement of U.S. policy on Indochina to the NSC for consideration. "The U.S. will not commit any of its armed forces to the defense of Indochina against overt, foreign aggression...." but should assist in the "formation of new national armies of the three Associated States." The U.S. should also "press the French" to carry out the agreements of 8 March 1949 and 30 December 1949. SEAC D-21, 11 October 1950..... 349
134. "The draft statement of U.S. policy in Indochina is weak from the political side....the Defense representatives argued for a strong, hardhitting policy on political and economic concessions. The State Department representatives flatly refused....to consider Indochina in that manner. Consequently, the paper ended with a compromise." K. T. Young, DoD Office of Foreign Military Affairs, letter to General Malony, SEAC, 13 October 1950..... 369

135. The State Department announces the results of high level conversations with French Ministers and that the U. S. Congress has appropriated one-half billion dollars in military assistance for the Far East. Department of State press release 1066, 17 October 1950..... 371
136. State and Defense recapitulate talks with the French Ministers, analyze Saigon's views on Indochina, and review the proposed NSC policy statement on Indochina: The French had not programmed equipment for 18 battalions in the 1951 budget and further had requested that the U.S. pay for and maintain the National armies when formed. It appears that the French will withdraw from Tonkin and may throw the problem to the U.N. The draft policy statement is considered quite adequate. Memorandum for the Record (Mr. K.T. Young), 17 October 1950..... 373
137. The current situation in Indochina reveals serious weakness in French manpower, leadership, and intelligence. The Viet Minh forces are building up for large-scale offensives to seize complete control of Indochina. The French Union forces of 353,970 are opposed by 92,500 Viet Minh regulars and 130,000 irregulars. U.S. Naval Intelligence Memorandum, 17 October 1950..... 382
138. The U.S. informs Emperor Bao Dai, with emphasis, that it is imperative that he give the Vietnamese people evidence of his determination to personally lead his country into immediate and "energetic opposition" to the communist menace. The U.S. has interpreted his "prolonged holiday" on the Riviera as lack of patriotism. It is tactfully suggested that further displays of procrastination might lead to loss of U.S. support for his government. Acheson 384 to Saigon, 18 October 1950..... 388
139. A Defense view is that it is "most important that the French do not quit cold and leave a political vacuum behind them." The U.S. should give increased military aid but not intervene and stress political steps by the French. Memorandum for Secretary Finletter, 19 October 1950..... 391
140. U.S. desires the immediate political and military advantages sought in the National army plan be found through integration of armed native contingents (Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, Catholics, etc.) into an army commanded by Bao Dai. Acheson 436 to Saigon, 25 October 1950..... 393
141. U.S. approves French request to transfer 24 -105 mm howitzers and 6 -155 mm howitzers of MDAP assistance to Indochina. Acheson 2250 to Paris, 27 October 1950..... 394



142.	General Brink, Chief MAAG-Indochina, reports that the French contemplate changing troops from "pacification" dispositions to larger unit regroupment. French military plans are keyed to delays in political decisions. Saigon 763 to Acheson, 4 November 1950 (see Enclosure A to Document No. 146, below).....	405
143.	The U.S. does not favor use of the Peace Observation Commission in Indochina and if the Indochina subject is to come into the United Nations, it is preferred that the French do it. Acheson 516 to UN, 22 November 1950.....	395
144.	The U.S. publicly welcomes the French statement which assures independence of the Associated States of Indochina within the French Union and that their resources will be directed "to the defense of Indochina against communist colonialism." Department of State press release 1187, 27 November 1950....	397
145.	"If the Communists are successful in Korea, this may so weaken the French in Indochina that they will pull out. He [Secretary Acheson] doubted if any one of the President's advisers would urge him to intervene in that situation." Extract from Truman-Attlee Conversations, 4 December 1950.....	398
146.	The Joint Chiefs of Staff position paper on possible future action in Indochina, 28 November 1950, is circulated for NSC consideration. This paper includes the Brink report (4 November 1950) as a reference. The JCS short term objectives emphasize urgent action to deny Indochina to communism, insure retention of responsibility by France, and development of an over-all military plan for Indochina. The long term objectives seek to prevent communist expansion, to establish internal security conditions such as the foreign armed forces would be removed, to press the French to carry out commitments, and to establish a regional security arrangement in Southeast Asia. Executive Secretary to the NSC, NSC 64/1, 21 December 1950.....	399

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147.	President Truman reasserts that U.S. aid to the French Union forces and National armies of the Associated States will continue. Truman-Pleven Conversations, 30 January 1951.....	417
148.	The U.S. is very unlikely to engage itself to finance the budgetary deficit of France (25 billion francs) required for the National armies in Indochina. Acheson 974 to Saigon, 30 January 1951.....	419



149. The first progress report on NSC 64, which was approved on 27 March 1950, assesses the most severe threat to French Indochina as the increased capability of the Viet Minh resulting from Red Chinese aid. Optimistically, the report concludes that "American military aid furnished the State's forces and the Army of the French Union may have been the decisive factor in the preservation of the area against communist aggression." State Department Memorandum to NSC, 15 March 1951..... 421
150. President Truman approves NSC Action 48/5 which states U.S. policy on Asia. With respect to Indochina, U.S. policy seeks to continue to increase French military effectiveness, to encourage internal autonomy, and to promote international support for the three Associated States. NSC 48/5, 17 May 1951..... 425
151. Dulles discusses problems with Parodi of participation of the three Associated States as "sovereign" with respect to U.N. membership, Viet Minh rival government, and positions of India, Burma, and Indonesia. Dulles-Parodi Conversation, 11 June 1951..... 446
152. The U.S. invites Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos to participate in signing of Japanese Peace Treaty. Saigon 132 despatch to State, 6 September 1951..... 447
153. The U.S. and Vietnam enter into an economic cooperation agreement. Agreement entered into force 7 September 1951... 449
154. The U.S. agrees with France that they will continue to be primarily responsible for Indochina, that U.S. troops should not be used, and that first priority in military aid should go to Indochina. U.S.-France Foreign Ministers Meeting, 11 September 1951..... 452
155. President Truman and Secretary Acheson pledge support for General DeLattre and that "we would not let Indochina fall into enemy hands." Memorandum of Conversation, Acheson, Schuman, and DeLattre, 14 September 1951..... 454
156. General DeLattre comments to the State Department that the aid program had not been working out satisfactorily due to the "missionary zeal" of certain "young men" which made it appear that the U.S. was extending its influence. State Department Discussions with DeLattre, 17 September 1951..... 456

157. The U.S. recounts the doubts and distrust remaining on the subject of colonialism in Indochina but maintains that the real issue is whether or not the Indochinese people will be allowed to exercise sovereignty or be subjected to communist terror. Dean Rusk Address, 6 November 1951..... 459
158. France requests that conversation take place immediately between U.S., U.K. and France concerning concerted action in the event of seemingly imminent Chinese intervention in Indochina. Bruce (Paris) 3765 to Acheson, 22 December 1951. 460
159. France delivers an aide-memoire to the U.S. on a proposal to appeal to the U.N. if Red China intervenes. Paris 3856 to Acheson, 29 December 1951..... 462

### 1952

160. Acheson reviews tripartite military discussions in which State did not participate. General Bradley, while unable to commit or indicate the extent of U.S. military assistance in the event of CHICOM invasion, would recommend to the President that a declaration be issued to Red China that retaliation would follow any aggression. Acheson 974 to Saigon, 15 January 1952..... 465
161. The NSC considers the consequences to the United States of communist domination of Southeast Asia. Loss of Southeast Asia is seen as putting economic and political pressures on Japan, opening sources of strategic materials to the Soviet Bloc, rendering the U.S. position in the Pacific precarious and jeopardizing lines of communication and trade routes to South Asia. If Red China intervenes, the U.S. should take appropriate military action as part of a U.N. action or in conjunction with others but not unilaterally. Annex to NSC 124, 13 February 1952..... 468
162. The CIA estimates that a joint warning against CHICOM intervention in Southeast Asia would tend to deter them, that initiation of action in the U.N. would probably bring a response similar to that regarding Korea, and CHICOM defiance of a joint warning would probably involve prior consent of the USSR. CIA Special Estimate, SE-22, 29 February 1952. 477
163. The JCS views on NSC 124 and Annex to NSC 124 are that military operations in defense of Indochina against Chinese Communist invasion must be accompanied by action against Communist China itself -- a course of action which might result in a long and expensive war, and that from a military point of view, the JCS oppose acceptance of all the military commitments of NSC 124. JCS Memorandum for the SecDef (forwarded to the National Security Council), 3 March 1952.. 486



164. The NSC recommends that the military implications of going to war in China be studied further and explained to the Council and the President; that the greater danger to Southeast Asia is subversion and not external aggression; and that contingencies for a French withdrawal be examined. NSC 113th Meeting (Item 3), 5 March 1952..... 502
165. The U.S. stresses to the British that rumors of French intentions to withdraw or negotiate with Ho Chi Minh are not true. The U.S. believes that France will stay in Indochina as long as sufficient U.S. aid is forthcoming. Acheson Conversation with British Ambassador, 28 March 1952..... 508
166. French stress their problems at tripartite meeting concerning their EDC commitments: (1) the French effort in Indochina, (2) financial difficulties and whether the strategic importance of SEA justified continued effort, and (3) Indochina is part of the European defense problem. France cannot continue to bear "alone such great share Indochinese burden." French attach great importance to U.S. aid. Acheson 7415 to State, 28 May 1952..... 511
167. If the Chinese invade Indochina, "he Acheson" said it was clear that it was futile and a mistake to defend Indochina in Indochina. He said we could not have another Korea.... we could not put ground troops in Indochina....our only hope was of changing the Chinese mind." Secretary of State Note (L.D. Battle), 17 June 1952..... 515
168. U.S. informs France that appropriations would be prepared to provide up to 150 million dollars additional FY 1953 aid in support of overall French effort in Indochina. Acheson 7404 to Paris, 17 June 1952..... 517
169. Acheson publicly announces optimism over the conduct of the National armies in Indochina and that communist "aggression has been checked" and that the "tide is now moving in our favor." State Department Release 473, 18 June 1952..... 518
170. The President approves NSC 124/2 (NSC 124/1 as amended) on the U.S. objectives and courses of action with respect to Southeast Asia. With respect to Indochina, the U.S. would continue to assure the French of the international interest of the Indochina effort; use U.S. influence to promote political, military, economic, and social policies; provide increased aid in the absence of overt Chinese aggression; oppose French withdrawal; and seek collective action against Red China intervention. NSC 124/2, 25 June 1952..... 520



171. The U.S. and Britain discuss issuing a warning to Red China on intervention in Indochina. French successes could trigger Chinese intervention and the U.S. had "no infantry available for operations within Indochina." The U.S. thinking is along the lines of a naval blockade of China's coast. London Ministerial Talks, 26 June 1952..... 535
172. The French request that 150 American Air Force mechanics be detailed to Vietnam receives an opinion for favorable action from General Trapnell, MAAG Chief, who also recommends expediting delivery of aircraft promised for 1953. Saigon 1149 to Acheson, 5 December 1952..... 538
173. The U.S. approves participation of 25-30 USAF personnel in maintenance of French aircraft in Vietnam. Acheson 1286 to Saigon, 22 December 1952..... 540

THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Washington, D. C.

26 January 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE:

Subject: Military Objectives in Military Aid Programs

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have reviewed the current Mutual Defense Assistance Program and have considered the military implications of future programs of this nature. From their study, they evolved the following objectives as the military basis for future military assistance programs.

The long-range overall military objective of United States military defense assistance programs should be the development of conditions which will improve to the maximum extent possible, within economic realities both current and foreseen, the ability of the United States in event of war to implement in conjunction with its allies a long-range strategic concept. Briefly, that concept is that the United States, in collaboration with its allies, will seek to impose the allied war objectives upon the USSR by conducting a strategic offensive in western Eurasia and a strategic defensive in the Far East.

Specific long-range objectives in furtherance of the overall military objective for future military defense assistance programs should be:

- a. Development of sufficient military power in Western Europe to prevent loss or destruction of the industrial complexes in that region and to control those areas from which future operations can best be projected;
- b. The security and the use of Greenland, Iceland, the Azores, the United Kingdom, and French Northwest Africa;
- c. Denial to our enemy of naval and air bases in Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France;
- d. Development of the Italian armed forces authorized by the peace treaty to their maximum strength and combat effectiveness. If peace treaty limitations are lifted, development of sufficient military power in Italy to delay materially and possibly to check Soviet invasion, to prevent loss of Sicily to an enemy, and to defend successfully those sea and air approaches within and adjacent to Italy which will be necessary for offensive operations;

c. Development of sufficient military power in selected nations of the Eastern Mediterranean-Middle East area to prevent Greece, Turkey, and Iran from capitulating to communism during the ideological conflict; and in event of war, to retain for the United States and its allies base areas in Turkey, to delay materially any USSR advance, possibly to deny to the enemy the oil resources and oil facilities of the Middle East and, with allied support; to assure control by the western powers of the Eastern Mediterranean and the security of base areas in Egypt;

f. Development of sufficient military power in South Asia (India and Pakistan) to promote the internal security of the area and to assure its Western orientation.

g. Development of sufficient military power in selected nations of the Far East\* and the Western Pacific Ocean area, to prevent further encroachment by communism in those areas; to insure, with the United States support, that in event of war, Japan, and the other Asian offshore islands, including the Philippines, are available for military use in order to constitute a multiple-front threat to the USSR, and by military action to delay any Communist invasion in other Far East and southeast Asia areas; and

h. Development of sufficient military power in Latin America to insure the security of the area and its external lines of communications and to furnish military forces for which United States or other allied forces might otherwise be used.

In connection with the foregoing specific military objectives for future military defense assistance programs, the Joint Chiefs of Staff would reaffirm their view that military cooperation between Spain and members of the North Atlantic security system would be in the security interests of the United States. Western Germany, and Austria, when and if granted authority to rearm, should be included in this security system. In the security interests of the United States, sufficient military assistance should be provided to Yugoslavia to insure continued resistance to Moscow control since such an example of successful opposition might encourage movements of resistance to Moscow control in other satellite states.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff are unable to predict the finite benefits to be achieved through the implementation of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949. They expect, however, that, as implementation progresses, the internal security situation of the recipient nations should improve concurrently. In addition, from the standpoint of United States military planning, increases in the armaments of the nations of

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\* For the purposes of this paper, Far East is defined as that part of Asia east of India, including Burma, Malaya, Thailand, Indonesia, Indo-China, China, Japan, and eastern Siberia.



Western Europe can be considered as a means of buying increased time for both preparations and movements, if there should be an invasion of that area. Further, the provision of new armaments of United States manufacture would serve to strengthen the industrial mobilization base of United States forces. The overall benefits to be derived are cumulative but over a period of time must depend largely upon the self-help efforts of the recipient nations.

The major portion of the funds appropriated in the Mutual Defense Assistance Act of 1949 is earmarked for members of the North Atlantic Treaty organization possessing major capabilities for self-help. While the Joint Chiefs of Staff cannot at this time recommend definite limitations on future assistance to these nations, they would suggest both progressive reductions in the aid to be provided in the future, and a time limit determined primarily by:

- a. Planned force requirements;
- b. The world situation generally;
- c. The finite benefits derived from each program toward the attainment of United States objectives; and
- d. The concrete demonstrations by recipient nations of self-help toward their national and collective security.

Further, and as a contingency in addition to a limit in time beyond which assistance to the North Atlantic Treaty members will not be extended, it should be emphasized the continuation of military aid even within that limit will be dependent upon the efforts for self-help and mutual aid exerted by each recipient nation since United States military aid can support but not replace efforts at self-help and will to resist.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff will continue to review the objectives of future military assistance programs and will recommend changes in these objectives to you as they become appropriate.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

(SIGNED)

OMAR N. BRADLEY,  
Chairman,  
Joint Chiefs of Staff

C O P Y

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington

February 2, 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: U.S. Recognition of Vietnam,  
Laos and Cambodia

1. The French Assembly (Lower House) ratified on 29 January by a large majority (396 - 193) the bill which, in effect, established Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia as autonomous states within the French Union. The opposition consisted of 181 Communist votes with only 12 joining in from other parties. The Council of the Republic (Senate) is expected to pass the bills by the same approximate majority on or about February 3. President Auriol's signature is expected to follow shortly thereafter.

2. The French legislative and political steps thus taken will transform areas which were formerly governed as Protectorates or Colonies into states within the French Union, with considerably more freedom than they enjoyed under their prior status. The French Government has indicated that it hopes to grant greater degrees of independence to the three states as the security position in Indochina allows, and as the newly formed governments become more able to administer the areas following withdrawal of the French.

3. Within Laos and Cambodia there are no powerful movements directed against the governments which are relatively stable. However, Vietnam has been the battleground since the end of World War II of conflicting political parties and military forces. Ho Chi Minh, who under various aliases, has been a communist agent in various parts of the world since 1925 and was able to take over the anti-French nationalist movement in 1945. After failing to reach agreement with the French regarding the establishment of an autonomous state of Vietnam, he withdrew his forces to the jungle and hill areas of

Vietnam



Vietnam and has harassed the French ever since. His followers who are estimated at approximately 75,000 armed men, with probably the same number unarmed. His headquarters are unknown.

The French counter efforts have included, on the military side, the deployment of approximately 130,000 troops, of whom the approximately 50,000 are local natives serving voluntarily, African colonials, and a hard core made up of French troops and Foreign Legion units. Ho Chi Minh's guerrilla tactics have been aimed at denying the French control of Vietnam. On March 8, 1949 the French President signed an agreement with Bao Dai as the Head of State, granting independence within the French Union to the Government of Vietnam. Similar agreements were signed with the King of Laos and the King of Cambodia.

Recent developments have included Chinese Communist victories bringing those troops to the Indochina border; recognition of Ho Chi Minh as the head of the legal Government of Vietnam by Communist China (18 January) and by Soviet Russia (30 January).

4. Recognition by the United States of the three legally constituted governments of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia appears desirable and in accordance with United States foreign policy for several reasons. Among them are: encouragement to national aspirations under non-Communist leadership for peoples of colonial areas in Southeast Asia; the establishment of stable non-Communist governments in areas adjacent to Communist China; support to a friendly country which is also a signatory to the North Atlantic Treaty; and as a demonstration of displeasure with Communist tactics which are obviously aimed at eventual domination of Asia, working under the guise of indigenous nationalism.

Subject to your approval, the Department of State recommends that the United States of America extend recognition to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, following ratification by the French Government.

(signed) DEAN ACHESON

Approved

9(signed)

Harry S. Truman

February 3, 1950



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

FEB 4 1950

AMCONSUL,

SAIGON,

59

You SHLD deliver (for timing see DEPTTEL 58) the FOL Messages from the PRES to Bao Dai Laos and Cambodia After consultation FR High Commissioner Actual letters will FOL by pouch.

QTE Your Imperial Majesty: . . . . .

I have Your Majesty's letter in which I am informed of the signing of the agreements of March 8, 1949 between Your Majesty, on behalf of Vietnam, and the President of the French Republic, on behalf of France. My Government has also been informed of the ratification on February 2, 1950 by the French Government of the agreements of March 8, 1949.

QTE Since these acts establish the Republic of Vietnam as an independent State within the French Union, I take this opportunity to congratulate Your Majesty and the people of Vietnam on this happy occasion. .

QTE The Government of the United States of America is pleased to welcome the Republic of Vietnam into the community of peace-loving nations of the world and to extend diplomatic recognition to the Government of the Republic of Vietnam. I look forward to an early exchange of diplomatic representatives between our two countries.

QTE I take this opportunity to extend my personal greetings to Your Majesty with my best wishes for the prosperity and stability of Vietnam.

QTE His Imperial Majesty

Bao Dai,

Head of State of the

Republic of Vietnam. UNQTE

. . . . .  
While you will present the letters in your capacity as CONGEN, PLS point out to the FOW Ministers of the three states that the letters of recognition also invite reply to the suggestion of exchange of DIPL REPS. DEPT understands France will acquiesce to this if requested by the three states. DEPT plans establish LEG Saigon with single Minister accredited three states. Mission to be headed by Chargé pending selection and appointment of Minister.

. . . . .1

ACHESON

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<sup>1</sup>Portion of telegram here deleted consists of similar letters to Kings of Laos and Cambodia.

# INCOMING TELEGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE—DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS

TELEGRAPH BRANCH

From: FE  
b:

Control 8725

Rec'd February 18, 1950  
7:31 p.m.

FROM: Bangkok

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 160, February 17, 10 p.m.

FOR MERCHANT FROM BUTTERWORTH.

View imminent departure Griffin mission and indications in Department 95 of February 10, noon that firm decision may be in process of being taken re military and other aid to Indochina, I thought you might like to have my impressions from conference discussions and talks with Thailand Prime Minister and Foreign Minister during which Stanton, Fossum and I pressed hard for recognition.

It is transparently clear that Asiatic neighbors of Indochina consider Bao Dai a French creation and a French puppet; despite current and anticipated actions of support by US and Western powers they prepared sell his regime short, if status Bao Dai remains undraditionally modified; even if such changes made promptly, he must exert effective leadership comparable to Ho's.

We should realize that ECA and military aid from US, just as recognition by US, do not constitute "missing components". While absence of ECA and military aid, just as lack recognition, would prove disadvantageous, under present circumstances they are not of primary importance and will not constitute decisive factors. Conference found Gullion's analogy with Greece far from persuasive and, in fact, dangerous delusion.

"Missing component"

RECEIVED

RECEIVED



-2- #160, February 17, 10 p.m., from Bangkok

"Holding constant" is further action by French which would place Vietnam in category of independent states.

Accordingly, Griffin mission should receive very precise and careful instructions prior to departure and it would be my recommendation that no ECA or military aid be committed to French Indochina unless France gives requisite public undertakings re further steps leading to status similar to Indonesia. Current French intentions seem epitomized by Faoletti's statement to Gullion (INTEL February 7, 7 a.m.,) that "French Parliament could not be sold Indochina accord ratified February 2 of only passing value and it would do more harm than good kindle unrealistic appetites in Vietnam which would necessarily be disappointed." Question, therefore, is what are the realistic nationalist appetites which will not be disappointed.

STATION

END. JMW

130 64

February 27, 1950

NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

to the

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

on

THE POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES WITH RESPECT TO INDOCHINA

The enclosed report by the Department of State on the subject is submitted herewith for urgent consideration by the National Security Council and the Secretary of the Treasury.

It is recommended that, if the Council and the Secretary of the Treasury adopt the enclosed report, it be submitted to the President for his consideration with the recommendation that he approve the Conclusions contained therein and direct their implementation by all appropriate executive departments and agencies of the U. S. Government under the coordination of the Secretary of State.

JAMES S. LAY, Jr.  
Executive Secretary

cc: The Secretary of the Treasury

D R A F T

REPORT BY THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

on

THE POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES WITH RESPECT TO INDOCHINA

THE PROBLEM

1. To undertake a determination of all practicable United States measures to protect its security in Indochina and to prevent the expansion of communist aggression in that area.

ANALYSIS

2. It is recognized that the threat of communist aggression against Indochina is only one phase of anticipated communist plans to seize all of Southeast Asia. It is understood that Burma is weak internally and could be invaded without strong opposition or even that the Government of Burma could be subverted. However, Indochina is the area most immediately threatened. It is also the only area adjacent to communist China which contains a large European army, which along with native troops is now in armed conflict with the forces of communist aggression. A decision to contain communist expansion at the border of Indochina must be considered as a part of a wider study to prevent communist aggression into other parts of Southeast Asia.

3. A large segment of the Indochinese nationalist movement was seized in 1945 by Ho Chi Minh, a Vietnamese who under various aliases has served as a communist agent for thirty years. He has attracted non-communist as well as communist elements to his support. In 1946, he attempted, but failed to secure French agreement to his recognition as the head of a government of Vietnam. Since then he has directed a guerrilla army in raids against French installations and lines of communication. French forces which have been attempting to restore law and order found themselves pitted against a determined adversary who manufactures effective arms locally, who received supplies of arms from outside sources, who maintained no capital or permanent headquarters and who was, and is able, to disrupt and harass almost any area within Vietnam (Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina) at will.

4. The United States has, since the Japanese surrender, pointed out to the French Government that the legitimate nationalist aspirations of the people of Indochina must be satisfied, and that a return to the prewar colonial rule is not possible. The Department of State has pointed out to the French Government that it was



and is necessary to establish and support governments in Indochina particularly in Vietnam, under leaders who are capable of attracting to their causes the non-communist nationalist followers who had drifted to the Ho Chi Minh communist movement in the absence of any non-communist nationalist movement around which to plan their aspirations.

5. In an effort to establish stability by political means, where military measures had been unsuccessful, i.e., by attracting non-communist nationalists, now followers of Ho Chi Minh, to the support of anti-communist nationalist leaders, the French Government entered into agreements with the governments of the Kingdoms of Laos and Cambodia to elevate their status from protectorates to that of independent states within the French Union. The State of Vietnam was formed, with similar status, out of the former French protectorates of Tonkin, Annam and the former French Colony of Cochinchina. Each state received an increased degree of autonomy and sovereignty. Further steps towards independence were indicated by the French. The agreements were ratified by the French Government on 2 February 1950.

6. The Governments of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were officially recognized by the United States and the United Kingdom on February 7, 1950. Other Western powers have, or are committed to do likewise. The United States has consistently brought to the attention of non-communist Asian countries the danger of communist aggression which threatens them if communist expansion in Indochina is unchecked. As this danger becomes more evident it is expected to overcome the reluctance that they have had to recognize and support the three new states. We are therefore continuing to press those countries to recognize the new states. On January 18, 1950, the Chinese Communist Government announced its recognition of the Ho Chi Minh movement as the legal Government of Vietnam, while on January 30, 1950, the Soviet Government, while maintaining diplomatic relations with France, similarly announced its recognition.

7. The newly formed States of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia do not as yet have sufficient political stability nor military power to prevent the infiltration into their areas of Ho Chi Minh's forces. The French Armed Forces, while apparently effectively utilized at the present time, can do little more than to maintain the status quo. Their strength of some 140,000 does, however, represent an army in being and the only military bulwark in that area against the further expansion of communist aggression from either internal or external forces.

8. The presence of Chinese Communist troops along the border of Indochina makes it possible for arms, material and troops to move freely from Communist China to the northern Tonkin area now controlled by Ho Chi Minh. There is already evidence of movement of arms.

9. In the present state of affairs, it is doubtful that the combined native Indochinese and French troops can successfully contain Ho's forces should they be strengthened by either Chinese Communist troops crossing the border, or Communist-supplied arms and material in quantity from outside Indochina strengthening Ho's forces.

#### CONCLUSIONS

10. It is important to United States security interests that all practicable measures be taken to prevent further communist expansion in Southeast Asia. Indochina is a key area of Southeast Asia and is under immediate threat.

11. The neighboring countries of Thailand and Burma could be expected to fall under Communist domination if Indochina were controlled by a Communist-dominated government. The balance of Southeast Asia would then be in grave hazard.

12. Accordingly, the Departments of State and Defense should prepare as a matter of priority a program of all practicable measures designed to protect United States security interests in Indochina.



DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON.



In reply refer to  
ID

March 1, 1950

The Honorable  
Robert Allen Griffin,  
Chief, Economic Survey Mission to the  
Southeast Asian Countries.

Sir:

I am pleased to inform you that the President has approved your designation as Chief of the Economic Survey Mission to the Southeast Asian Countries, with the personal rank of Minister. There is enclosed the President's letter of appointment.

This Mission has been established with the following basic objectives: (1) To determine justifiable projects needed in the countries to be visited for financing out of funds appropriated by Congress pursuant to Section 303 of the Mutual Defense Assistance Act which will have immediate political significance; (2) To lay the groundwork for the anticipated Point 4 program in the Southeast Asian countries, with special attention given to the problem of avoiding disillusionment by keeping proposed projects within a proper perspective; (3) To advise the local authorities on the preparation for the Point 4 program, particularly with reference to the local conditions that will be required for Point 4 assistance, the extent and kind of participation which would be required of them in any joint project, and to the anticipated operating methods; (4) To brief the United States representatives in the area on current Department thinking regarding the anticipated Point 4 program; and (5) To investigate regional aspects of technical assistance programs. More detailed instructions for the conduct of this Mission will be furnished you in separate communications and may be supplemented from time to time by cable.

Since this is an official government Mission, it must act as a unit and express the views of the Government rather than the views of individuals. As Chief, you shall be responsible for such coordinated action, and in the event of disagreement within the Mission, your decision shall be final and binding.

However



However, this is not intended to bar the expression of personal views, provided such views do not run counter to the laws of the United States, the policy of the Administration or your instructions. Where personal views are properly expressed, they should be clearly identified as personal.

You will appreciate, I am sure, that the members of the Mission are not authorized to offer any written or oral statement which might be construed as committing this Government to a definite course of action or which might involve an obligation to expend governmental funds not previously appropriated and allocated.

You are requested to communicate with the Chief of the United States Mission in each country on your itinerary and to seek his advice and counsel as circumstances warrant. Mr. McAfee of the Department, who has been designated as one of your Advisers, may be looked to for assistance in your relations with the United States Missions and with the Department.

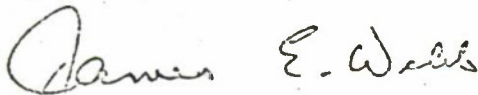
You are authorized to delegate to another member of the Mission all authority held by you in the event of your inability to exercise the functions of your position.

Details of the financial and transportation arrangements for your journey are contained in a Travel Order which will be sent to you under separate cover.

It is expected that you will transmit by air pouch or cable preliminary reports from each country visited, and at the conclusion of the Mission a comprehensive report listing justifiable immediate projects, appraising the local governments' attitudes toward collaboration in anticipated programs, and appraising the possibilities of a regional approach to the implementation of programs to meet regional needs. Enclosed for your convenience is the usual outline for conference reports, which, though it will not quite fit your requirements, may nonetheless prove useful as a convenient checklist of a number of the items to be covered and the format which is desirable in all reports to the Department. You may wish to supplement this formal report with a confidential report.

You and your colleagues undertake your responsibilities with the assurance of my keen interest and wholehearted support. I have every confidence in the individual ability of the Mission members and in the capacity of the Mission as a whole, under your able leadership, to reflect credit on the United States in this important undertaking.

Very truly yours,

James E. Wells

Under Secretary

Enclosures:

1. Letter of appointment.
2. Outline for report.

March 7, 1950

Dear General Burns:

Embodied below is a brief statement of Department of State policy in Indochina and Southeast Asia. I believe that an examination of this statement will facilitate your consideration of NSC 64.

The Department of State continues to hold that Southeast Asia is in grave danger of Communist domination as a consequence of aggression from Communist China and of internal subversive activities. The Department of State maintains that Indochina, subject as it is to the most immediate danger, is the most strategically important area of Southeast Asia.

The Department of State believes that within the limitations imposed by existing commitments and strategic priorities, the resources of the United States should be deployed to reserve Indochina and Southeast Asia from further Communist encroachment. The Department of State has accordingly already engaged all its political resources to the end that this object be secured. The Department is now engaged in the process of urgently examining what additional economic resources can effectively be engaged in the same operation.

It is now, in the opinion of the Department, a matter of the greatest urgency that the Department of Defense assess the strategic aspects of the situation and consider, from the military point of view, how the United States can best contribute to the prevention of further Communist encroachment in that area.

The military assessment requested above is necessary to a final determination by this Government of the manner in which United States policy in this area shall be executed.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Dean Rusk  
Deputy Under Secretary

Major General James H. Burns,  
Office of the Secretary  
of Defense,  
Department of Defense.



TELEGRAM RECEIVED

From: SECSTATE WASHINGTON

Date: March 9, 1950.

No: 136

Recd: March 10, 1950

Sent Saigon 136, Paris 1023, London 1070, repeated Tokyo 212

March 9, 6 PM, Secret

Re Paris tel 62 to Saigon. Dept believes situation clearly points to possibility of friction between French and Viets re mechanics of handling US military aid. Although vitally interested in satisfactory solution, Dept feels nothing to gain by US intervention in what is a matter for joint decision three states and French. Therefore Legation should exercise caution in maintaining neutral attitude unless lack agreement endangers program, in which case Dept will act. Your continuing progress reports required.

Similarly the related problems concerning the relations of the states with France and with each other are obviously capable of friction, which US should be careful to avoid.

In meantime, the status of the French prepared request for military aid has been received in only basic form, and awaits further clarification from Paris (see Deptel 850 to Paris, repeated Saigon as 109). Request for economic aid in more understandable terms has been received. Embassy here states PIGNON has copies both economic and military lists Saigon for information GRIFFIN Mission and Legation. Exercise care ensure no embarrassment to French or states results from your use such lists. BAO DAI's long request to JESSUP now being translated, and not yet available for study. French request for military aid from UK not yet available Dept.

Against background foregoing, following comments on Urtel 157, March 6.

Paragraph 2. Agencies represented on NAC working group have received all relevant documents on economic discussions. Summary Bao Dai Memo likewise available, but full translation not completed. Military requests in present basic form (see above) not made available to all civil agencies pending clarification.

Paragraph 3. Dept has no information.

Paragraph 4. Three stated and French must, we feel, reach own agreement on unique lists. Above all, we cannot urge acceptance of one or another draft unless we are prepared to accept it, and this is not true of any presentation hitherto made.

Paragraph 5. Griffin Mission function is clearly understood to be fact finding.

ACHESON



# TELEGRAM SENT

To: SECSTATE, WASHINGTON

Date: March 13, 1950

No: 176, 86 to Paris

Charged to: Goe

Sent Dept 176 repeated Paris 86, Dept pass Paris

FROM GRIFFIN.

1. Mission work till now has been limited to receiving requests Fr, Viets, Cambodians, Laotians. None of these coordinated yet by them or us, although French have shown at least part of their program as developed here to Viets. This has been time consuming process of many meetings and postponements. No difficulty anticipated with relatively simple Cambodian Laotian program as these people cooperate with French and are suspicious of Viets.

2. Puzzled by paragraph five Deptel 136, March 9. My understanding was that this Mission was instructed cable program recommendations from field after examination (fact finding) proposals and that subject had urgency. We have repeatedly informed French and Viets of our hope that they have meeting of minds at least on essential and urgent items so that US could act more promptly. We have not tried to force either party to consolidate its program with the other and we have not urged any course in the sense second sentence of your paragraph 4. In fact our concern, clearly stated in Legtel reference, has been to preserve our government from being put into such a position.

3. I understand that ours is an economic aid mission and our remarks in sense of paragraph 2 above have been confined to economic aid. However, two programs should be mutually supporting and will possibly overlap to some extent. Dept is entirely right in foreseeing grave friction on distribution of military aid. The controversy on military aid which is budding without any help from the mission could jeopardize success of economic program. (Legation believes Department's views about not venturing any remarks on subject reconciling views on military aid may be inconsistent with Deptels 122, March 4 and 129, March 8). In view of effervescence in press and French and Viet Govt circles over AFP report that all aid would be through France, mission and Legation have thought opportune to let things simmer down before trying sell Bao Dai and Carpentier on views in referenced Deptels. My denial of agency report should calm matters somewhat.

4. Extremely urgent to prepare and initiate program at earliest date or political benefit will be vitiated. Fact finding here should produce report reasonably believed to be acceptable Pignon as well as Bao Dai. If entire matter is put aside for negotiation in remote capitals in future sometime, efforts to make good-will for and with Bao Dai elements might be destroyed. We have just been informed by LEDOUX on his arrival from Paris that economic aid program for fifteen million submitted directly to Washington and being studied by interested agencies there. From Ledoux's brief comment on make-up this Paris/Washington submission not realistic economic or political being designed more to relieve French balance-of-payments position than achieve US objectives of political economic support in Indochina. (See Legtel 165, March 8 paragraph 10 (c). Ledoux requesting permission Pignon give us copy this evening. Composition of program is of course very important. Must emphasize strongly that how American aid is extended and how rapidly are factors at least as important as how much.

5. LIPSMAN, DICKINSON and BLUM have worked most usefully with Mission. Dr. MOYER's presence has been immeasurably helpful.

6. You may anticipate at least recommendation that five million dollars ECA funds if they can be made available current fiscal year should be employed here. We will suggest what phases program should be allocated that fund. You may also anticipate that in this particular country GRIFFIN and GULLION may recommend ECA Mission take complete charge all economic aid under coordination by Chief diplomatic mission. This respect perhaps ECA should be alerted as top job will require person good stature and capacity (Dickinson and Blum have seen, concurred the proposal and Dickinson will discuss on return).

7. Cambodians and Laotians welcome technical aid prospects. Viet have hitherto insisted without much documentation they well furnished with Viet technicians. We learn today they under misapprehension they would have to pay salaries American US technicians sent here which may account for their past attitude. They now preparing requests for considerable technical assistance. French have demonstrated great technical capacity here in past and have many able technicians. They show no enthusiasm for Point IV. While March 8 Agreements provide priority French technicians, French might show some latitude this connection. Their skepticism reported due belief Point IV has too little money and drive behind it and will not bear fruit for many years.

8. Gullion concurs.

GULLION

Griffin/  
LAGullion/vdm/cia

SECSTATE

WASHINGTON

MARCH 16, 1950.

Sent Dept as \_\_\_\_\_: Dept pass Paris \_\_\_\_\_ and ECA from  
Saigon

FROM GRIFFIN

A- The visit of this mission in Indochina has resulted in fol conclusions:

1- The wave communism is riding in Indochina is predominantly a nationalist movement, not econ, social or ideological-

2- While situation is serious it does not justify defeatism, but does justify effective application US aid in endeavor to strengthen Bao Dai Viet Govt versus communist-controlled Vietminh.

3- Viet Govt of Bao Dai is not a puppet, but an intensely nationalistic Govt struggling to secure more control and authority from Fr. Most these Viet elements with whom we have come in contact are outspokenly anti-Fr

4- It is feasible thru econ aid program help win from HO's Vietminh the non-Communist elements that continue support Ho, as well as large proportion of present numerous fence-sitters. It is believed this can be promoted by application Amer aid thru means Bao Dai Govt, increasing its appearance of independence, its local and international prestige, its ability to conduct useful works for benefit of common people. US aid wld thereby become major contributing factor psychologically and materially, provided it is bold, quick and generous.

C O P Y



5. FV Army altho under severe pressure is gradually achieving its important limited objective of clearing Tonkin and Saigon deltas; most important population, rice-producing, communications and urban sectors. As far as we able observe locally, FV Army and Viet units of same well led, efficient, will not withdraw in face of Commie threat, US aid following closely in wake of operations will speed task by village rehabilitation program.

6. Chi-Commie invasion threat does not appear immed. US aid will better prepare FV and Viet to eliminate it and sterilize areas of Vietnamese infection which might link up with threat. On other hand, mil intelligence has verified that limited but potentially increased Chi-Commies material support to HO has begun, suggesting advisability speedy US aid.

7. Rarely seen justification lies in extreme poverty liberated areas, deterioration public works, irrigation systems, rice culture, destruction by Vietnamese of towns, villages, telecommunications, health facilities, etc., as personally surveyed by mission in Tonkin. Deplorable health conditions of people in Tonkin warrant immed relief.

B. Above facts govern type and tempo of US aid.

In general it shld:

1. Concentrate on projects which will best support mil and polit objectives.

2. Show dramatic and immed results and arouse wide and realizable hopes of prompt effect.

3. Be designed improve welfare, living conditions as many people as soon as possible in preference long-term projects, or projects justified reference to FV balance of payment needs.

4. Develop competence in new Govt administrations and create basic services and beginnings long-range program.

C. Fol are specific urgent programs for 15 months ending Jan 30, 1951, totalling \$23,500,000, exclusive of mil aid and present indirect US aid thru FR, and derived MI as result of study requests of local Govts for \$304,000,000 short term and \$316,000,000 long-term projects, incl both dollar and piastre costs.

1. Rural rehabilitation

a) Health and sanitation, med supplies and equipment, incl mobile units, educational supplies, bldgs for clinics, water purification--\$6,000,000.

b) Engineering Units--20 centers, to be pilot mechanized operations. Requirement for each center: 5 tractor units, attachments, and parts for land preparation, irrigation ditch repair, total 20 centers, \$2,000,000 (incl maintenance and supplies). Earth-moving equipment for dike operations and canals \$1,500,000.

c) Agricultural supplies

20,000 tons ammonium phosphate--\$2,000,000

Farm vegetable seed \$50,000. Farm tools (\$1,000,000)

d) Rice mills. \$2,000,000

e) Short-term construction roads, \$1,000,000.

2. Commodities-- \$2,500,000

cotton and cotton yarn

Reinforcing steel

Galvanized sheeting

Raw silk

POL

3. Telecommunications-- \$1,000,000
4. Technical equipment, publications, training aids-- \$600,000
5. Trainees to US (50 at \$5,000)-- \$250,000
6. Power, light and engineering, mines and ports, bridges, fish  
reduction plants, small craft-- \$3,000,000
7. Propaganda funds supplementing USIS program-- \$500,000.

Program at this time obviously preliminary. Complete fiscal info not yet available; mil security many regions in flux; and pending Interstate Conf may change bases entire program. There shld be continued development details of program by leg at Saigon, pending establishment operating aid mission. Understand econ staff of leg to be augmented and recommend be done without delay so studies can proceed vigorously. Fact that these recommendations tentative does not reduce urgency that operating mission be put in field with maximum speed. Even after operating mission established, must expect continued changes program view of fact-changing situation and add'l fast-finding. Above program contained within moderate limits due to limitation of funds believed to be available. Program capable quick substantial expansion and therefore wider, stronger impact if China aid residue made available general area. Further study would also reveal additional outlets useful expenditures.

#### D. Field Organization

For mission organization recommended:

- a) all econ aid programs, whatever legislative authority utilized, to be administered by single econ mission. It is recommended that ECA set up the field organization and direct the operations of Indochina economic aid program.



b) Objectives of economic mission to be established in agreement diplomatic mission; and detailed activities having political impact to be undertaken, modified, or terminated in agreement diplomatic mission.

c) Chief of economic mission (CECOM) to have responsibility for effective contribution of all members of mission to objectives as established, and for coordination of their activities with policies established with diplomatic mission; and to have administrative authority over all members of mission whether on payroll of mission or of another government agency participating in economic program.

d) Activities of mission to be carried out only on the basis of renewable project or aid agreements, negotiated by chief of diplomatic mission and CECOM. In bilateral or multi-lateral bodies set up similar to JICA or services; head US representatives to be responsible to CECOM.

e) CECOM to be appointed by RDA recognizing that CECOM must also derive authorities under 903, Point IV, or other legislation covering available funds. CECOM and as many members of mission as possible should have good working knowledge of language.

f) Recommend consideration be given to Joint Administrative Staff to handle all house-keeping functions for Legation and Econ Mission.

1. Propaganda.

Separate cable prepared on this subject.

F. SOME PROBLEMS

(1) Financial Considerations

Principal financial question is extent to which Viet Nam and other States finance their requirements to support U.S. aid program possibly including payment of their counterpart for at least some items U.S. aid.

Viet Nam budgetary deficit, not including local French civilian and military items, approximately 1.5 billion piastres current fiscal year. Expenditures about 2.8 billions and revenues about 1.3 billions. This deficit being financed by Bank of Indo-China advances to Viet Nam Treasury secured by promise French Treasury make francs available to Bank. Do not yet know how it is planned finance deficit after Bank of Indo-China is no longer Bank of Issue.

Most of proposed U.S. aid would be through Government-type projects rather than directly to private consumers who could be expected pay piastres. Ability Viet Nam provide counterpart would depend on level its cash balances which we do not yet know; on whether Bank Indo-China or new Bank of Issue would lend to Viet Nam and on what terms; and on whether Viet Nam would be able divert present outlays to counterpart payments U.S. aid. Not to be expected Viet Nam would be able increase non-loan budgetary receipts or borrow by means of security issues. Possibility of borrowing from the new Bank of Issue cannot be determined until its powers established by forthcoming inter-State conference.

To certain extent counterpart requirement may reduce political effectiveness of aid because aid is no longer outright gift. However, this probably outweighed by usefulness of counterpart which can be very great in channeling local currency expenditures for constructive purposes. Because aid will probably come from several funds, possibly including ECA which generally requires counterpart, it seems desirable have rule requiring counterpart in principle but waiving wherever justified, e.g. where no local currency available or no economically productive results expected. In this connection

suggest you consider possibility generating piastre counterpart through direct programing ECA dollar aid Indo-China now going indirectly through Franco.

(2) Issue of negotiations

Vietnamese very suspicious of all negotiations conducted in Paris. They have as yet no official representatives abroad. Moreover, they seem to trust Pignon more than other French. Consequently, as much economic and political negotiation as possible should be carried on in Saigon, if it is our desire increase status new governments.

(3) Administration of aid

In principle Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia should be direct recipients of economic aid and it is so recommended. Allocations deriving from French funds already appropriated or allocations of French counterpart would of course require French authorizations, preferably large scale en bloc.

Aid agreements should be with each separate state, but French will have to be handled with gloves. Extension of some kinds of aid to associate states en bloc has many merits; tends to promote regional understanding, but strongly opposed by Vietnam and to lesser extent by other states as device for continuing French control. French repudiate any idea such control, claim quadripartite cooperation as provided in March 8 agreement is necessary to prevent wrecking complementary economies Indochinese countries, to preserve Laos and Cambodia from encroachments of Viet Nam, prevent corruption and inefficiency. Claim their only interest is as counselors. (See Log. tel \_\_\_\_\_).

Present intransigency on both sides, Viet emotionalism, their impatience at delay in applying conventions for application of March 8 Agreements, feeling that latter is already outdated, bode no good for forthcoming



Interstate conference and promises serious difficulties in relations French and three states in future.

(4) French Attitude Points A and U. S. Technicians

With respect to possible Viet Nam requests for U. S. Technicians, just before final meeting last night, French working civil representatives expressed very literal view of Section 4 March 8 Agreements reserving priority for French technical advisers. We have not yet had opportunity to confirm with (Pignon) French claim March 8 agreements represented basis their relations Indochinese states and should not be tampered with. Indicated possibility some latitude in definition of technicians and readiness to accept American technicians in a peculiarly U.S. field, but their general attitude was such as to cause us disquiet as to possibility exercising even minimum U.S. supervision of U.S. program.

(5) Maintaining equilibrium

Mission aware local national governments hold unrealistic views toward many government problems and that any precipitous weakening French influence and control might in near future lead to chaos playing into hands of Ho Chi Minh. Mission doubtful if local governments have administrative machinery capable most efficient handling aid but accepts this condition as inevitable calculated risk in complex situation. Mission reiterates this is delicate situation, and efforts to build up new governments should not undermine French prestige and morale here and in France.

(C) NEED FOR URGENT ACTION

Obstacles and difficulties innate in this complex and turbulent political situation must not be permitted to retard decision to allocate aid money required, to enter negotiations for aid agreements, to appoint and expedite

operating mission, to have ships arrive earliest date with aid materiel.

The crux of the situation lies in prompt decisive action if desired political effect is to be attained.

(H) Gullion, Dickinson, Blum have collaborated in preparation this cable and concur.

C O P Y

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

6 P.M.  
MAR 29 1950

AMEMBASSY,

PARIS.  
1363

Dept has predicated its course of action in Indochina since FEB 2 this year on assumption that fundamental objectives of US and France in Indochina are in substantial coincidence. Dept assumes:

1. That French are determined to protect IC from further COMME encroachments by POLIT, ECON as well as MIL measures.

2. That French understand that success of MIL operation, i.e. containment of northern border against COMME penetration as well as reduction of Ho's forces elsewhere IC, depends, in the end on overcoming opposition of indigenous population.

3. Therefore France proposes in support of this policy to strengthen Bao Dai and the Kings of Laos and Cambodia in every practical way, to that non-COMME nationalists abandon Ho, support Bao Dai and Kings and can thus reduce guerrilla activity.

It is evident from reaction Asian states to US and FR effort to secure their recognition Bao Dai, from attitude Scandinavian powers and from reactions US press that large segment public opinion both East and West continues to regard Bao Dai and two Kings as French puppets not enjoying nor likely to enjoy degree of autonomy within FR Union accorded them under MAR 8 agreements, analogous to that accorded INDO by NETH.

US Govt has used its POLIT resources and is now engaged in measures to accelerate its ECON and financial assistance to IC states. As you know Dept has requested Joint Chiefs of Staff to QTE assess the strategic aspects of the situation and consider, from the mil point of view, how the United States can best contribute to the prevention of further Communist encroachment in that area. UNQTE You are of course familiar with position Jessup has taken RE SEA during his recent tour. Dept accordingly considers that its position is clear and that the character of its past actions and proposed undertakings justifies its suggesting to FR a course of action which it believes requisite to success of operation Indochina.



As said foregoing it appears to Dept that true character FR concessions to IC nationalism under M&R 8 agreements and ultimate intentions in that area are clear to Dept but not RPT not clear to other interested parties. DEPT believes that Indochinese NMTL movement, interested Asiatic states and large segment public opinion Western world unsympathetic and apathetic to this great issue because FR have not made these elements sufficiently clear. You will surely understand that DEPT does not RPT not believe that present situation IC calls for further substantive concessions from FR at this time involving parliamentary action to Bao Dai or two Kings. Obviously Bao Dai and company barely able to discharge responsibilities they are now facing. No part of representations which DEPT suggests you make to FR SHID be construed as arguing for increase in concessions at this time. This connection, DEPT strongly of view that transfer of Palace to Bao Dai most important single propaganda move possible now; Abbott emphasizes this, suggesting suitable attendant ceremonies. It must be clear to you and through you to FR that DEPT's concern at present is only that FR make its present position and future intentions clear to non-COMMIE neutral world.

DEPT had previously considered asking that you transmit in appropriate form to FR FOMOFF note quoted below. Upon reflection in the course of which views Jessup and Butterworth RECD DEPT believes you SHID make strong oral representations FR FOMOFF using FOL lines as basic guidance in such manner as WLD in your judgment best serve the achievement objectives identified foregoing. Your advice as to manner and timing of such approach awaited by Dept.

QTE The US Govt has expressed its gratification at the ratification by the FR GOVT of the agreements with the GOVTS of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The real and continuing interest of the US in the strengthening and stabilization of anti-COMMIE NMTL regimes in Indochina is well known to the GOVT of France as is the full confidence of the US in the intentions of the FR GOVT to adopt all measures requisite to providing the three states with the strength, POLIT and MIL, without which they will be unable to defeat Ho Chi Minh and his foreign COMMIE allies.

QTE The Govts of France and the US have long considered that the recognition of the GOVTS of the three states by Asian states was a matter of prime importance in order that the anti-COMMIE NMTL movements in Indochina be accorded, in the eyes of the world, their true characters as genuine NMTL movements and not, as world communism alleges, the creatures of INNER QTE Western imperialism END INNER QTE. The US Govt has, during the past several weeks, approached the several Asian GOVTS most DEED concern with the state of affairs in Indochina, impressing upon them the desirability of their DEED recognizing the GOVTS of the



three new states. The Thai Govt recognized the Indochinese states on FEB 28. Unfortunately, the US REPS accredited to the remaining Asian countries have been informed by the officials of those countries that they regard the GOVTS of the three states as FR puppets and that, more important, they are not convinced of the genuine character of FR intentions ultimately to accord the states of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia the full measures of independence and sovereignty which have recently been transferred by the NETH to INDO. The responsible ministers of the Asian powers concerned have stated in substance that were the Republic of France to announce publicly that the present agreements were the first steps in an orderly evolutionary process, the end and purpose of which is to accord the three states of Indochina complete independence, sovereignty and administration of their own affairs (within the FR Union), those Asiatic states WLD be prepared favorably to consider recognition of the three states in Indochina even before such additional transfers of sovereignty WLD have actually been made. Therefore, while Dept obviously unable guarantee recognition and support for such statement, Dept believes that in absence such statement further acts of recognition by Asian states not forthcoming. Dept keenly aware of self-evident fact that INDOES cannot administer complexities Indochinese affairs without FR assistance. Dept determined as matter of general policy to emphasize interdependence France and Indochina as was successfully done in case NETH and Indonesians. DEPT believes that independence and autonomy of three IG states must clearly be understood to lie within FR Union.

The GOVT of the US is aware of the concessions granted by the Republic of France in negotiating and ratifying the Agreements. The US GOVT has indicated to the Govt of France its desire to be of assistance to the three states and to the FR ADMIN in Indochina in enabling them successfully to contain and liquidate communism in Indochina. The US GOVT is aware of the fact that the GOVT of France shares its concern that communism be excluded not only from Indochina but from the entire SEA region. The execution of this policy requires, above all things, a unanimity of support on the part of the nations of SEA of the anti-COMMIE Indochinese nationalist GOVTS of Indochina.

QTB With full consciousness of the difficulties involved, the US GOVT requests the Govt of France seriously to consider the issuance at the earliest possible moment of a public statement of the character identified in the foregoing. While it is not for the DEPT to suggest the particularities of the text of such a statement, the DEPT believes that the FR GOVT SHLD make clear therein the concessions to Indochinese nationalism which it made in the M.R. 8 agreements, and the supplementary accords lest both FR accomplishments and intentions in this great matter be tragically misunderstood not only in Asia but in the Western world as

WALL, WALTER

ACHESON

FB:PSA:WSB Lacy:REHcoy  
EUR:WE:EO'Shaughnessy

304



Saigon via Dept

April 9, 3 pm, 1950

29

April 22, 10 am, 1950

RE: HUNG

A THRU HUNG

Sent Dept 24, wtd Radio 221 Hanoi 10 am Saigon.

April 9, 6 pm New Orleans.

Has an excellent background:

1. Appointed Vice Min of Finance will be for several years previous to 1945 when he moved to southern Indochina (April 24, Apr 2)

Has a wealthy son from Saigon. China traditionally more French than other areas. He is also old and patriotic. Very much into the Indochina movement. Propaganda opportunities to certain, but more of a generalist. Suggestions of his mind rather long.

2. On other hand nomination has certain advantages. He has a political and principal seat spot in south and has some prestige, knows how to make decisions both in villages, has large amount Catholic support, has considerable wealth. The Balais may also join party. Has claims to have obtained some joining earlier cabinet and his coming into new government seems he thinks the Balais particularly giving concern especially with US as chief partner.

3. Believe he will be easier negotiate and deal with than Govt than Long not only because Long and Saigon created much of a rift but because he is considerably more accessible. Long wishing to stay on would probably have grasped any aid possible given him by America.

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to Long.

4. Long failed for variety reasons: His personality rubbed people wrong way, he had few contemporaries in Govt (63 is ancient in these latitudes) he tried to run Govt himself, he could not conciliate Tonkin, he did not work miracle in applying Mar 8 agreement, he had bad luck in having riot break out on Mar 19 (for which local officials more responsible than he) causing Viets lose face before America. UNTANUP(daily?) his enemies taxed him with this and with failure to put on big show Griffin Mission. Finally he humiliated Pignon publicly at final five cornered meeting Griffin Mission.

5. Fr would probably never admit latter influenced them but it did. Fr have powerful leverage on any govt in controlling rate of transfer of powers under Mar 8 agreement and execution of supplementary accords. If a Vietnam govt does not get powers rapidly from Fr it comes under cross-fire of own people and Fr, situation Fr can maneuver to nicety. Of course this cannot be done indefinitely. Exact manner and extent to which it occurred this time may never be known but Bao Dai's and Long's accounts sufficiently circumstantial to indicate something like this happened. Nothing so crude as action by Pignon or consultation of him by Bao Dai took place. Think Fr would undoubtedly have preferred Dien but Bao Dai opposed, face saving continuance Long over Fester probably also his idea.

#### 6. Fol are implications for US policy:

A. Prospect of US aid indirectly cause for crisis by inducing Viets hyper-confidence and also by furnishing occasion for Viet Minh demonstration.

B. Any Viets who lose by change and think we are responsible will be bitter and may magnify y our role.

C. In view of overall objectives and aid programs and also because of absence party parliamentary system here as we know it, better for US if national union govt set up. Yet if we took any initiative we would have assumed some re-

...and... This may eventually become necessary as the... and... It would then follow that... probably information and that other... no should go behind innocent inquiries and... being.

B. Aid program can be worked out more easily with the... It appear to have provided change at least partly because... Vito's receiving aid directly should come to... in establishing... giving Vito adequate recognition and participation. A... contribution I can make is to suggest that... This... in... and... but hope produce something... Vito's reaction various points this... would be useful.

Signed Sullivan.

... ..

Group - 759

...



⑩ April 1950  
5

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

(SECDEF HAS SEEN)

SUBJECT: Strategic Assessment of Southeast Asia

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have studied your memorandum, dated 10 March 1950, with its enclosures,\* in which you requested their views regarding:

a. The strategic importance, from the military point of view, of Southeast Asia;

b. NSC 64, a report by the Department of State on the position of the United States with respect to Indochina, which is now before the National Security Council for consideration;

c. The measures that, from the military point of view, might be taken to prevent Communist expansion into Southeast Asia;

d. The order of magnitude and means of implementation of such measures; and

e. A French aide-memoire on the subject of aid for Indochina, dated 16 February 1950.

1. In light of U. S. strategic concepts, the integrity of the offshore island chain from Japan to Indonesia is of critical strategic importance to the United States.

2. The mainland states of Southeast Asia also are at present of critical strategic importance to the United States because:

a. They are the major sources of certain strategic materials required for the completion of United States stock pile projects;

b. The area is a crossroad of communications;

c. Southeast Asia is a vital segment in the line of containment of communism stretching from Japan southward and around to the Indian Peninsula. The security of the three

\*See letter from Mr. Rusk to General Burns, dated March 7, 1950, reproduced at the end of this memorandum.

major non-Communist base areas in this quarter of the world--Japan, India, and Australia--depends in a large measure on the denial of Southeast Asia to the Communists. If Southeast Asia is lost, these three base areas will tend to be isolated from one another;

d. The fall of Indochina would undoubtedly lead to the fall of the other mainland states of Southeast Asia. Their fall would:

(1) Require changing the Philippines and Indonesia from supporting positions in the Asian offshore island chain to front-line bases for the defense of the Western Hemisphere. It would also call for a review of the strategic deployment of United States forces in the Far East; and

(2) Bring about almost immediately a dangerous condition with respect to the internal security of the Philippines, Malaya, and Indonesia, and would contribute to their probable eventual fall to the Communists;

e. The fall of Southeast Asia would result in the virtually complete denial to the United States of the Pacific littoral of Asia. Southeast Asian mainland areas are important in the conduct of operations to contain Communist expansion;

f. Communist control of this area would alleviate considerably the food problem of China and would make available to the USSR important strategic materials. In this connection, Soviet control of all the major components of Asia's war potential might become a decisive factor affecting the balance of power between the United States and the USSR. "A Soviet position of dominance over Asia, Western Europe, or both, would constitute a major threat to United States security"; and

g. A Soviet position of dominance over the Far East would also threaten the United States position in Japan since that country could thereby be denied its Asian markets, sources of food and other raw materials. The feasibility of retention by the United States of its Asian offshore island bases could thus be jeopardized.

3. In the light of the foregoing strategic considerations pertaining to the area of Southeast Asia, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, from the military point of view, concur in the conclusions in NSC 64.

4. Military forces of both France and the United Kingdom are now actively opposing communism in Southeast Asia. Small indigenous



forces are allied with them. In addition, the generally inadequate indigenous forces of the independent states are actively engaged in attempting to maintain internal security in the face of Communist aggression tactics.

5. It appears obvious from intelligence estimates that the situation in Southeast Asia has deteriorated and, without United States assistance, this deterioration will be accelerated. In general, the basic conditions of political and economic stability in this area, as well as the military and internal security conditions, are unsatisfactory. These factors are closely inter-related and it is probable that, from the long-term point of view, political and economic stability is the controlling factor. On the other hand, the military situation in some areas, particularly Indochina, is of pressing urgency.

6. With respect to the measures which, from the United States military point of view, might be taken to prevent Communist expansion in Southeast Asia, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend early implementation of military aid programs for Indochina, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Burma. Malaya might also be included provided the British by their actions in the areas in Asia where they have primary interest evince a determined effort to resist the expansion of communism and present sufficient military justification for aid. The effectiveness of these military aid programs would be greatly increased by appropriate public statements of United States policy in Southeast Asia.

7. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that the military aid from funds already allocated by the President for the states of Southeast Asia be delivered at the earliest practicable date. They further recommend that the presently unallocated portion of the President's emergency fund under Section 303 of Public Law 329 (81st Congress, 1st Session), be planned and programmed as a matter of urgency.

8. Precise determination of the amounts required for military aid, special covert operations, and concomitant economic and psychological programs in Southeast Asia cannot be made at this time since the financial requirements will, to a large extent, depend on the success of aid and other programs now in the process of implementation. In the light of the world situation, however, it would appear that military aid programs and other measures will be necessary in Southeast Asia at least during the next fiscal year and in at least the same general over-all order of magnitude. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, therefore, strongly recommend that appropriations for over-all use in the general area of Asia be sought for the next fiscal year in terms similar to those under Section 303 of Public Law 329 (81st Congress, 1st Session). It is believed that approximately \$100,000,000 will be required for the military portion of this program.



9. In view of the history of military aid in China, the Joint Chiefs of Staff urge that these aid programs be subject, in any event, to the following conditions:

a. That United States military aid not be granted unconditionally; rather, that it be carefully controlled and that the aid program be integrated with political and economic programs; and

b. That requests for military equipment be screened first by an officer designated by the Department of Defense and on duty in the recipient state. These requests should be subject to his determination as to the feasibility and satisfactory coordination of specific military operations. It should be understood that military aid will only be considered in connection with such coordinated operational plans as are approved by the representative of the Department of Defense on duty in the recipient country. Further, in conformity with current procedures, the final approval of all programs for military materiel will be subject to the concurrence of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

10. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that a Southeast Asia Aid Committee be appointed with State, Defense and ECA representation which will be responsible for the development and implementation of the program for the general area of Southeast Asia. Requests for aid should be screened by the field representatives of the committee in consultation with the local authorities in the countries concerned.

11. Present arrangements for military aid to Indonesia through the military attaches and to the Philippines through the Joint United States Military Aid Group appear to be satisfactory and should be continued.

12. A small military aid group should be established in Thailand to operate in conformity with the requirements in paragraph 9 above. Arrangements for military aid should be made directly with the Thai Government.

13. In view of the very unsettled conditions in Burma, the program for military aid to that country should, for the time being at least, be modest. The arrangements should be made after consultation with the British, and could well be handled by the United States Armed Forces attaches to that country. Arrangements for military aid to Malaya, if and when authorized, should be handled similarly except that request should, in the first instance, originate with British authorities.

14. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recognize the political implications involved in military aid to Indochina. It must be appreciated,



however, that French armed forces of approximately 140,000 men are in the field and that if these were to be withdrawn this year because of political considerations, the Bao Dai regime probably could not survive even with United States aid. If the United States were now to insist upon independence for Vietnam and a phased French withdrawal from that country, this might improve the political situation. The French could be expected to interpose objections to, and certainly delays in, such a program. Conditions in Indochina, however, are unstable and the situation is apparently deteriorating rapidly so that the urgent need for at least an initial increment of military and economic aid is psychologically overriding. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, therefore, recommend the provision of military aid to Indochina at the earliest practicable date under a program to implement the President's action approving the allocation of 15 million dollars for Indochina and that corresponding increments of political and economic aid be programmed on an interim basis without prejudice to the pattern of the policy for additional military, political and economic aid that may be developed later.

15. In view of the considerations set forth in paragraph 14 above, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend the immediate establishment of a small United States military aid group in Indochina, to operate in conformity with the requirements in paragraph 9 above. The Joint Chiefs of Staff would expect the senior member of this group to sit in consultation with military representatives of France and Vietnam and possibly of Laos and Cambodia. In addition to screening requests for materiel, he would be expected to insure full coordination of military plans and efforts between the French and Vietnamese forces and to supervise the allocation of materiel. The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe in the possibility of success of a prompt coordinated United States program of military, political, and economic aid to Southeast Asia and feel that such a success might well lead to the gaining of the initiative in the struggle in that general area.

16. China is the vital strategic area in Asia. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are firmly of the opinion that attainment of United States objectives in Asia can only be achieved by ultimate success in China. Resolution of the situation facing Southeast Asia would therefore, be facilitated if prompt and continuing measures were undertaken to reduce the pressure from Communist China. In this connection, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have noted the evidences of renewed vitality and apparent increased effectiveness of the Chinese Nationalist forces.

17. The Joint Chiefs of Staff suggest the following measures with military implications:

a. An increased number of courtesy or "show the flag" visits to Southeast Asian states;

b. Recognition of the "port closure" of Communist China seaports by the Nationalists as a de facto blockade so long as it is effective. Such action should remove some of the pressure, direct and indirect, upon Southeast Asia; should be of assistance to the anti-Communist forces engaged in interference with the lines of communication to China; and should aggravate the economic problems and general unrest in Communist China;

c. A program of special covert operations designed to interfere with Communist activities in Southeast Asia; and

d. Long-term measures to provide for Japan and the other offshore islands a secure source of food and other strategic materials from non-Communist held areas in the Far East.

18. Comments on the French aide-memoire of 16 February 1950, are contained in the substance of this memorandum. The Joint Chiefs of Staff do not concur in the French suggestion for conversations between the "French and American General Staffs" on the subject of Indochina since the desired ends will best be served through conferences in Indochina among the United States military aid group and military representatives of France, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are not unmindful of the need for collaboration and consultation with the British and French Governments on Southeast Asia matters and recommend, therefore, that military representatives participate in the forthcoming tripartite discussions on Southeast Asia to be held at the forthcoming meeting of the Foreign Ministers.

FOR THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF:

/s/ OMAR N. BRADLEY  
Chairman  
Joint Chiefs of Staff



State Paper: Indochina

333 Comment: Repeat and reemphasize their views and recommendations on Indochina which you forwarded to Secretary of State on 14 April 1950. Recommend these recommendations be reflected in State paper.

Recommend that, besides telling French, U. S. prepared to assist French and Three Associated States, French also be told that arrangements for U. S. military aid be made as a result of conversations in Indochina between U. S., French, Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian military representatives. Also recommend State make unmistakable to French the firm desire of the U. S. to send a military aid group to Indochina at the earliest possible date.

THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
Washington 25, D.C.

2 May 1950

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE:

Subject: Indochina

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have, from the military point of view, reviewed the Department of State draft position paper entitled "Indochina" (FM D C-3a, dated 25 April 1950) and have formulated the following views thereon:

The Joint Chiefs of Staff stated their views and recommendations concerning measures which, from the United States military point of view, might be taken to prevent Communist expansion in Southeast Asia in general and Indochina in particular in a memorandum to you, dated 5 April 1950, which views were forwarded by you to the Secretary of State on 14 April 1950. Among other things, the Joint Chiefs of Staff stressed in their memorandum:

- a. The urgent need for early arrival of military aid;
- b. The requirement that such aid be integrated with political and economic programs; and
- c. That a small United States military aid group be established in Indochina immediately for the purpose of:
  - (1) Screening requests for military material, the requests to be subject to determination by the senior member thereof as to the feasibility and satisfactory coordination of specific military operations;
  - (2) Insuring full coordination of military plans and efforts between the French and Vietnamese forces; and
  - (3) Supervising the allocation of material to those forces.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff further recommended therein that military representatives participate in the forthcoming tripartite discussions on Southeast Asia at the meeting of the Foreign

Ministers. The Joint Chiefs of Staff would reaffirm their views and recommendations expressed above, as well as in the remainder of their memorandum of 5 April 1950, and recommend further that they be reflected in the basic draft position paper.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff would make further specific comments on the basic draft position paper as follows:

a. The seventh unnumbered paragraph under the heading Background should be revised along the following lines:

The "missing component" in the picture consists of three factors, namely, political, military, and economic. The first two are at present the most important and should be emphasized. In the military field the greatest defect has probably been the lack of coordination between the French and the indigenous forces, coupled with immediate deficiencies in various items of equipment and material and with uncertain morale on the part of the Indochinese and the French. Very early, and continuing assistance is needed by the Indochinese and the French forces in order to meet their present needs. Such assistance must consist in general of additional equipment within reason (unavailable to the French from other sources) and of appropriate military advice.

b. The second unnumbered paragraph under the heading Discussion should be revised along the following lines:

The success of the military program depends upon the support given by the French, Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians to the coordinated operations plans prepared in Indochina, and, to a lesser extent, upon the receipt of specific items of military material from the United States. In view of the larger aspects of the struggle against world communism, judicious political concessions in Indochina by the French, and timely and adequate, but controlled, aid on the part of the United States will eventually pay dividends to both.

c. Under Recommendations, the paragraph headed Discussions with the French should be revised to:

(1) Incorporate in Recommendation 2) a provision that the arrangements for United States military aid be made in Indochina as a result of conversations there between United States, French, Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian military representatives; and



(2) Change Recommendation 5) so as to make unmistakable the firm desire of the United States to send a military aid group to Indochina at the earliest possible date for the purposes indicated in your memorandum to the Secretary of State, dated 14 April 1950. In this connection, the Joint Chiefs of Staff regard with strong disfavor the desires and continued attempts of the French to settle, on the political level, the military and internal security problems of Indochina in Paris.

Recognizing their own responsibilities in the matter, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, from the point of view of the military security interests of the United States, again urge the immediate establishment of an authoritative United States military aid group in Indochina.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

/s/ Omar N. Bradley

OMAR N. BRADLEY,  
Chairman,  
Joint Chiefs of Staff.

THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Washington, D.C.

2 May 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE:

Subject: Southeast Asia

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have formulated the following comments, from the military point of view, on the Department of State draft position paper entitled "Southeast Asia" (FM D C-2a, dated 25 April 1950).
2. The Joint Chiefs of Staff concur fully in the expressions in the subject paper as to the importance of the area of Southeast Asia to the United States. They concur in general as to the need for British and French action along the lines indicated in the draft position paper. Moreover, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that the currently unfavorable situation in Southeast Asia, an area important both to the United States and to the Communist movement, warrants assumption by the United States of a much more forceful and positive position than is expressed or implied in the draft position paper.
3. As stated in the CONCLUSIONS in NSC 68, -- "Our position as the center of power in the free world places a heavy responsibility upon the United States for leadership. We must organize and enlist the energies and resources of the free world in a positive program for peace which will frustrate the Kremlin design for world domination by creating a situation in the free world to which the Kremlin will be compelled to adjust. Without such a cooperative effort, led by the United States, we will have to make gradual withdrawals under pressure until we discover one day that we have sacrificed positions of vital interest."
4. The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that the United States and the other Western Powers should take immediate and positive steps to achieve the initiative in the present conflict. Further, they consider that success in Southeast Asia might well lead to the gaining of the initiative in the struggle within the Far East.
5. In light of the foregoing and in order to retrieve the losses resulting from previous mistakes on the part of the British and the French, as well as to preclude such mistakes in the future, the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider it necessary that positive and proper leadership among the Western Powers be assumed by the United States in Southeast Asia matters. They, therefore, recommend that the draft position paper on "Southeast Asia" be revised along the lines of NSC 68 and paragraph 4 above.

C O P Y

6. In addition to the foregoing general recommendation, the Joint Chiefs of Staff would make the following specific recommendation regarding that part of the third paragraph of the subject paper headed REGIONAL ARRANGEMENTS which states:

"For the United States to underwrite a regional coalition including Japan, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand does not increase American commitments; we must accept responsibility for assisting in the defense of these powers against aggression."

The Joint Chiefs of Staff, from the military point of view, disagree in principle with such a single far-flung regional arrangement and do not concur in the statement that American commitments would not be increased by underwriting such a coalition. The Joint Chiefs of Staff would from the military point of view agree to appropriate military arrangements between nations in Southeast Asia capable of effective mutual support.

7. The Joint Chiefs of Staff desire to reaffirm their views on this subject as transmitted by the Secretary of Defense to the Secretary of State on 14 April, and reemphasize the need for immediate consideration and implementation of an integrated and effective U.S. course of action for Southeast Asia.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff

(SIGNED)

OMAR N. BRADLEY,  
Chairman,  
Joint Chiefs of Staff



State Paper: Southeast Asia

JCS Comment: Concur fully in the expressions in the State paper as to the importance of Southeast Asia to U. S. Urge much more forceful and positive U. S. position than expressed or implied in State paper. Believe U. S. and Western powers should take immediate and positive steps to achieve the initiative in the present conflict. Consider it necessary that positive and proper leadership among Western Powers be assured by U. S. in Southeast Asia matters. Recommend revision of State paper along the lines of NSC 68 and the above views.

Disagree that U. S. underwriting of a regional coalition in Asia would not increase U. S. commitments. Agree to appropriate military arrangements between nations in Southeast Asia capable of effective mutual support.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
OUTGOING TELEGRAM

AMEMBASSY,

May 3, 1950

LONDON.

2049

FOR MERCHANT.

PRES on MAY 1 approved allocation of ten million DOLS from 303 to Defense to cover current early shipment urgently needed MIL aid items to IC. Also approved was three million for Indonesia.

DEPT has requested Defense IMMED to start supply action on two hundred thousand rounds 37 mm ammunition plus 9,000 links to Army of FR Union IC consigned COMDR in Chief Saigon. At some time Dept has requested Defense to initiate supply action equipment (less small arms) for 12 infantry battalions for the Vietnam State Army (as separate from FR Union Forces). Dept has requested at least a part of latter equipment if at all possible be included in same shipment with 37 mm ammunition and consigned High MIL COMITE for Vietnam Army. Thus first shipment WLD contain items for both Army FR Union and Viet Army. Defense has no timetable yet for departure date of such shipment but Dept has pushed for early action. Aid will be subject usual bilateral agreements if in view Dept those required. Airplanes now under discussion between MAAG Paris and FR authorities. When mutual agreement is reached on airplane types and firm program emerges, DEPT will request further funds be allocated since ten million insufficient.

In view requests for INFO on US MIL aid to IC from both FR and Viets Dept believes above INFO SHLD be communicated to both FR and Viet Govts for their confidential RPT confidential INFO.

Dept proposes communicate this INFO this week to FR AMB WASH. US DEL London notify FR DEL, EMB Paris notify FR Govt and LEG Saigon notify High Commissioner and Viet Govt SUBJ to comments USDEL, Paris EMB and Saigon LEG.

FE:PSA:REHoey

ACHESON

May 4, 1950

Mr. Griffin

Conference on Indo-China - May 2, 1950.

1. The Indo-China situation cannot be maintained in its present status quo.

Time is of the essence in the Vietnam situation. Bao Dai and his Government cannot maintain a status quo. Bao Dai must either quickly win additional support and begin showing gains in prestige or there will be a falling away of his present following. There is general cynicism in Vietnam about the French willingness to permit reasonable self-government, and that cynicism spreads to the Bao Dai Government. Bao Dai at present represents a minority group, but he still is potentially capable of achieving substantial majority support if he can prove that he is taking over authority and responsibility and is exercising them. He must be given face. Unless the present trend is materially and almost immediately corrected, Bao Dai's opportunity will be irretrievably lost and his strength will run to water. To salvage the situation a fundamental agreement must be brought about with the French, followed quickly and with certainty with action designed to make Bao Dai a success. If Bao Dai once starts slipping, it will be impossible to restore him.

2. Problem of a foundation for agreement.

In order to have a firm basis of agreement with the French regarding U.S. relations with the State of Vietnam and the Kingdoms of Cambodia and Laos, it is almost a necessity to secure from the French a rational evaluation of what they expect of Indo-China, a forecast of the situation they reasonably believe can be brought about that would satisfy the aspirations of the people of Vietnam within the French Union.

The French themselves were forced to the conclusion that a conclusive military solution of their problem was unattainable and they resorted, therefore, to the effort to bring about a political solution. In that effort the United States became involved in the recognition of the Government of Vietnam.

The French



The French also recognize the fact that they cannot afford a continued military cost of hundreds of millions of dollars a year in a campaign that has failed and that has no prospects of bringing about a military solution. As ERF aid is subsequently reduced, it will be impossible for the French to carry this expense. Even today, with the help of ERF, domestic plans of the French Government are deeply affected by this drain, which indirectly but powerfully affects the Government's capacity to deal with labor, social and educational exigencies at home.

The French are also aware, realistically, of the military weakness on the continent due to the maintenance of a military establishment in Indo-China that absorbs half of the regular army and the best cadres for troop training, whose losses are continuous, and whose depletion of French officer strength equals the output of new officers from the French military academies. This, incidentally though importantly, affects the United States position in military assistance to the Continent.

Despite French sentimental aspirations for absorbing colonial areas within the body and spirit of "Metropolitan France," there is no doubt that the French are realistic enough, when not emotionally disturbed, to appreciate the fact that the peoples of Vietnam can no longer be "integrated" in that respect.

Therefore it appears that the time has come that an entirely rational French consideration of this problem must take place, that can be the foundation of policy considerations. It is strictly necessary that this consideration be made now, so that U.S. policy may reasonably and justifiably work in cooperation with the French in attempting to make firm and workable a self-governed Vietnam State conditioned to find it desirable and advantageous to be a part of the French Union.

In short, we must find out what the French expect of Vietnam.

3. Decisions and actions necessary to create public respect for the Bao Dai government.

- a. A clear definition of the French Union, its meaning, its responsibilities and guarantees including the guarantee of a method for "evolutionary" treatment of countries accepted as partners within the French Union. These conditions have never been defined, and no one knows what the French Union means.

b. Implementation

- b. Implementation of the provisions of the March 8 agreement. This should not be a mean or petty literal and parsimonious interpretation, but broad and generous. Not only have the French been laggard in carrying out the terms of the agreement but they have been jealous and circumscribed in interpretation of every provision. (In the matter of technical assistance to the Viets, the French Secretariat was adamant in its opposition to any form of American or other foreign aid, stating that such aid was a violation of the agreement.)
- c. The attitude of the French towards the Viet Government must be one of acceptance of a fact and a determination to make a success of that Government. This may be contrary to human nature, but it is doubtful if that Government can succeed without the most generous, if not passionate, French assistance. This assistance must be on a subordinate level, thorough and complete. It is indispensable. Until now the French attitude has been to point with scorn at the failures and aberrations of the untrained Viet Government leaders and to take the "I told you so" attitude.
- d. Acceptance of the principle of bilateral relations between other governments and the Bao Dai regime. This will be hard for the French to take. They desire to maintain the form or myth of a quadripartite arrangement. While a form of at least tripartite arrangement is necessary among the Vietnam, Cambodian and Laotian Governments -- for physical and economic reasons -- it is imperative for the prestige of the Bao Dai Government for it to be able to conduct some dealings with other governments. This should apply at least to a substantial part of the proposed economic aid program. When the U.S. and Britain recognized Bao Dai, that recognition was taken as a bilateral action. In itself it established a precedent. This is a vital issue, and one of the most difficult to work out.

e. Turning



- e. Turning over to Bao Dai of the No. 1 residence in Saigon, now occupied by the French High Commissioner. This is symbolic as well as practical. This is undoubtedly the reason why it is impossible for Bao Dai to take residence in the capital city, where his presence would be a sign of the reality of his Government. Even Fignon is opposed to this, on the grounds that it would affect French morale. Nevertheless this cannot be overlooked.
- f. Statement of the French that their purpose in training and preparing for field operations of a Bao Dai army is part of their plan for the complete protection of the country by Viet Forces, which thereafter would enable them to withdraw.
- g. There are many other actions, most of them minor in importance in western eyes but highly significant to Orientals, that can be taken to cut up the prestige and position of Bao Dai. Some of these proposals have been contained in Gullion's cables.

#### 4. Current Military Problems.

A French army of mixed but "regular" troops of approximately 150,000 men is maintained in Indo-China, chiefly in the Province of Tonkin, to prevent the overrunning of the Province and the Red River valley by the Viet Minh and to stand guard against Chinese invasion or infiltration.

The presence of this army is indispensable even though many Bao Dai supporters would prefer to have it removed forthwith. These people believe they could settle their differences with Ho Chi Minh by negotiation if the French were withdrawn. The latter point of view is not realistic, and there is good reason to believe that withdrawal of French forces would quickly lead to Communist takeover.

French-trained Viet troops are effective and loyal, and those embodied in the French army are said to be the equal of any colonial troops. The French are vigorously training approximately 50,000 Viet troops for the Bao Dai army. Such units, once tried and found satisfactory,

can in



can in time begin to take over French garrisoned areas and make possible the return to the Continent of regular French contingents.

An American arms program can be used to stimulate this training and replacement program.

There is the danger that French public sentiment -- and some practical military pressure -- might cause the French to threaten to withdraw entirely from Indo-China and "cut their losses", if pressure on the French for "evolutionary" treatment of the Viet political problem became too severe. This consideration cannot be overlooked when working for concessions. There is already strong feeling in many French quarters that Indo-China should be written off before more blood and treasure are lost.

As the French are required by the situation and by our insistence to turn over more authority to the Viet Government, it must be recognized that the morale of the French army might be affected. No measure could influence that situation more favorably than if the United States were willing to pledge sea and air support for the Viet-French forces in the event of the threat of invasion of Vietnam from Communist China.

Generals Carpentier and Messendel are officers of the highest calibre. Carpentier's apparent acquiescence to the arming of several Sao Dai battalions with American small arms is an indication that he is willing to yield on some subjects on which he had appeared to be adamant. He speaks frequently of his friendship and great respect for American Generals Gruenther and Mark Clark. In matters affecting important military decisions and American policy in the Indo-China field it might be most useful to send General Gruenther there, after a complete policy briefing, to discuss and review the entire military subject with Carpentier.

HAGriffin:ckg

5-4-50

326

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FOR THE PRESS

MAY 11, 1950  
NO. 485

At his press conference today, Acting Secretary Webb made the following statement:

AID TO SOUTHEAST ASIA

A special survey mission, headed by R. Allen Griffin, has just returned from Southeast Asia and reported on economic and technical assistance needed in that area. Its over-all recommendations for the area are modest and total in the neighborhood of \$60 million. The Department is working on plans to implement that program at once.

Secretary Acheson on Monday in Paris cited the urgency of the situation applying in the associated states of Viet-Nam, Laos and Cambodia. The Department is working jointly with ECA to implement the economic and technical assistance recommendations for Indochina as well as the other states of Southeast Asia and anticipates that this program will get underway in the immediate future.

Military assistance for Southeast Asia is being worked out by the Department of Defense in cooperation with the Department of State, and the details will not be made public for security reasons.

Military assistance needs will be met from the President's emergency fund of \$75 million provided under EDAP for the general area of China.

Economic assistance needs will be met from the ECA China Aid funds, part of which both Houses of Congress have indicated will be made available for the general area of China. Final legislative action is still pending on this authorization but is expected to be completed within the next week.

MAY 23, 1950

No. 345

# U.S. PROMISES ANNOUNCES INTENT TO ESTABLISH AN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO THE THREE ASSO- CIATED STATES OF INDOCHINA

On May 22, 1950, Charles d'Aubert, Minister of Foreign Affairs, announced to the press the following letter to the Chiefs of State of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia on May 22, 1950, signed at Saigon. Simultaneously, Ambassador James D. Eastman announced the following letter to the President of the United States in Paris.

The text of the letter follows:

"I have the honor to inform you that the Government of the United States has decided to initiate a program of economic aid to the States of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. My Government has reserved the right in order to assist Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam in their economic and financial development."

The United States Government has decided to establish in Saigon, a special economic mission to Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. This mission will have the responsibility of working with the Governments of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam and with the French High Commission in order to plan and carrying out a co-ordinated program of economic aid designed to assist the three countries in restoring their normal economic life. The members of the American economic mission will at all times be subject to the authority of the Government of the United States and will not become a part of the administrations of the Associated States.

The Government of the United States recognizes that this American assistance will be complementary to the efforts of the three Associated States and France, without any intention of substitution. American aid is designed to reinforce the joint efforts of the three governments and peoples



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of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, on whom rests the primary responsibility for the restoration of security and stability.

"United States economic aid will be granted in accordance with separate bilateral agreements between each of the Associated States and the United States of America. The approval of these agreements will be subject to legal conventions existing between the Associated States and France. Initial economic aid operations, however, may begin prior to the conclusion of these agreements.

c "The United States Government is of the opinion that it would be desirable for the three governments and the French High Commissioner to reach agreement among themselves for the coordination of those matters relating to the aid program that are of common interest. The American economic mission will maintain contact with the three Associated States, with the French High Commissioner in Indochina and, if desired, with any body which may be set up by the Associated States and France in connection with the aid program.

"Mr. Robert Blum has been appointed Chief of the United States special economic mission to Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

"Identical letters are being addressed today to the governments of Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and the President of the French Union."

The letter of intent refers only to economic aid which will be based on the recommendations of the Griffin mission which recently made a survey trip to Southeast Asia and carried on consultations with the leaders and technicians of Indochina.

Secretary of State Dean Acheson announced the policy of United States aid to Indochina at Paris on May 3 when he released this statement following an exchange of views with Foreign Minister Schuman of France:

"The Foreign Minister and I have just had an exchange of views on the situation in Indochina and are in general agreement both as to the urgency of the situation in that area and as to the

necessity for remedial action. We have noted the fact that the problem of meeting the threat to the security of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos which now enjoy independence within the French Union is primarily the responsibility of France and the governments and peoples of Indochina. The United States recognizes that the solution of the Indochina problem depends both upon the restoration of security and upon the development of genuine nationalism and that United States assistance can and should contribute to these major objectives.

"The United States Government convinced that neither national independence nor democratic evolution exist in any area dominated by Soviet imperialism, considers the situation to be such as to warrant its according economic aid and military equipment to the Associated States of Indochina and to France in order to assist them in restoring stability and permitting these states to pursue their peaceful and democratic development."



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FOR THE PRESS

JUNE 3, 1950  
NO. 583

The following is the text of a letter of June 2 from Secretary of State Dean Acheson to the Honorable Robert Allen Griffin, upon the conclusion of his assignment as Head of the Special Economic Mission to Southeast Asia:

"Dear Mr. Griffin:

"I congratulate you upon the successful conclusion of the Special Economic Mission to Southeast Asia which you led and extend to you and those on your staff my warmest personal thanks for the careful and thorough job you did. In surveying so large an area under conditions which called for constant diplomatic tact and skillful technical appraisal under the severest time pressure you performed with outstanding ability a most difficult assignment.

"On the basis of your recommendations the United States Government is launching a program which will offer rapid economic aid to those countries for which you drew up plans. The purpose of this assistance, as you well know, is to mobilize the natural and human resources of these countries for the improvement of the general welfare of the people and the strengthening of democratic governments throughout Southeast Asia.

"The fresh approach you took, unhampered by preconceived plans, and the creative ability which you displayed in working out a program with the approval of the Asian governments concerned have contributed much to the auspicious launching of this important program.

"Sincerely yours,

"DEAN ACHESON

"The Honorable

"Robert Allen Griffin,

"Pebble Beach, California."

\* \* \*

JUNE 27, 1950

## STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

In Korea the Government forces, which were armed to prevent border raids and to preserve internal security, were attacked by invading forces from North Korea. The Security Council of the United Nations called upon the invading troops to cease hostilities and to withdraw to the 38th parallel. This they have not done, but on the contrary have pressed the attack. The Security Council called upon all members of the United Nations to render every assistance to the United Nations in the execution of this resolution. In these circumstances I have ordered United States air and sea forces to give the Korean Government troops cover and support.

The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war. It has defied the orders of the Security Council of the United Nations issued to preserve international peace and security. In these circumstances the occupation of Formosa by Communist forces would be a direct threat to the security of the Pacific area and to United States forces performing their lawful and necessary functions in that area.

Accordingly, I have ordered the Seventh Fleet to prevent any attack on Formosa. As a corollary of this action I am calling upon the Chinese Government on Formosa to cease all air and sea operations against the mainland. The Seventh Fleet will see that this is done. The determination of the future status of Formosa must await the restoration of security in the Pacific, a peace settlement with Japan, or consideration by the United Nations.

I have also directed that United States Forces in the Philippines be strengthened and that military assistance to the Philippine Government be accelerated.

I have similarly directed acceleration in the furnishing of military assistance to the forces of

France and the Associated States in Indo China and the dispatch of a military mission to provide close working relations with those forces.

I know that all members of the United Nations will consider carefully the consequences of this latest aggression in Korea in defiance of the Charter of the United Nations. A return to the rule of force in international affairs would have far reaching effects. The United States will continue to uphold the rule of law.

I have instructed Ambassador Austin, as the representative of the United States to the Security Council, to report these steps to the Council.



OUTGOING TELEGRAM

AMLEGATION,

July 1, 1950.

SAIGON.  
No. 4.

TOMAP

DEPT desires clarify principles governing US MIL aid Indochina and ascertain that all parties to agreement fully understand and concur in arrangements for division of aid, TRANS of title, reception, distribution, accounting, maintenance and use this aid.

A. Principles.

Basic principles governing grant of aid are:

1. Provide MIL assistance as supplementary to FR assistance, and with their concurrence, to the three ASSOC States in order assist them in achieving internal security. It is firmly believed that such security is essential prerequisite ESTAB of stable economy and conditions wherein ECON assistance and aid such as Point IV can effectively be applied. Aid to States will enable them develop their regular armies and to extent considered desirable in accordance Section D, below, their irregular forces (garde civile, auto-defense units). Fighting conditions Indochina make it desirable utilize to greater extent native troops adaptable to conditions of area.

2. Provide assistance army of FR Union so that this force may be strengthened in its resistance to COMMIE aggression both from within and without Indochina.

PRES Truman's statement JUN 27 confirms DEPT'S belief that as FR forces represent only important unit in area capable decisive MIL action, a particular effort must be made assist them. US MIL aid, however, will continue supplement and not replace direct FR efforts in area.

3. Recent developments Korea indicate possible diversionary efforts elsewhere by COMMIES. Events may therefore

require reassessment aid requirements FR, involving additional assistance by US at expense aid ASSOC States. Until such eventuality develops DEPT will continue give strongest support possible to ASSOC States in order development independent and stable GOVTS shall not be impeded and their position strengthened in eyes INTERFATL public opinion.

#### B. Military Aid Agreement.

Draft agreement transmitted DEPTEL 427, JUN 28, represents effort both to simplify requirements for furnishing MIL assistance and to take due account of existing treaties, especially on MIL matters, between ASSOC States and FR. In view LEGTEL 460, PARA II, five party agreement now appears more realistic than bilaterals countersigned by FR. DEPT urgently awaits your comments re applicability in unusual Indochina situation.

#### C. Application Agreement.

1. TRANS title, receipt, distribution, accounting, maintenance of US MIL assistance furnished.

DEPT desires be assured MIL aid program will be administered in most efficient manner. Since forces ASSOC States are not yet fully organized DEPT hopes FR and ASSOC States will ESTAB mutually suitable working arrangements (REF LEGTEL 460) and subsequently will work in close COOP LEG and its MAAG to assure SATIS handling and utilization of US MIL aid provided.

REFTEL PARA II indicates FR and ASSOC States already developing such working arrangement for MIL EQUIP destined ASSOC States. DEPT and DEF proceeding assumption procedures outlined now effective, and particularly that (a) HMC is official consignee EQUIP destined each ASSOC State; (b) MEM or REP of HMC has been or will be designated to take title to and receipt for such EQUIP; and (c) actual unloading, reception, assembling, distribution, protection, and continued maintenance, including stocking of spare parts, such EQUIP will be as indicated. Desire LEG confirm.

D. Aid to Unofficial Forces.

DEPT concurs MIL aid SHLD be supplied units such as Caodai, Catholics, etc. Such aid, however, SHLD not be given direct either by US or FR. DEPT strongly feels aid to these units must be distributed only by ASSOC States, at discretion of Chiefs of State with concurrence FR. Such aid SHLD prove excellent POLIT weapon encourage integration these currently useful but potentially troublesome groups with regular forces ASSOC States. As active part of NATL forces these units SHLD prove to be valuable assistance guerrilla fighting. Uncontrolled, with possibility direct aid, they may well become embarrassing liability.

ACHESON

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S/MDA:WGalbraith



Indo-China

1. Existing Policy

a. U.S. Policy with respect to Indo-China as approved by the President on 24 April 1950 concludes that:

(1) Indo-China is a key area of Southeast Asia and is under immediate threat.

(2) The neighboring countries of Thailand and Burma could be expected to fall under Communist domination if Indo-China were controlled by a Communist-dominated government. The balance of Southeast Asia would then be in grave hazard.

(3) Accordingly, the Departments of State and Defense should propose as a matter of priority a program of all practicable measures designed to protect United States security interests in Indo-China.

b. On 10 April 1950 the JCS concurred in the above conclusions and recommended early implementation of military aid programs for Indo-China, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Burma. Such aid programs to be closely controlled and be integrated with political and economic programs.

c. On 7 July 1950 the JCS (J.C.S. 1924/14) approved the following in their review of NSC 73.

"If the Chinese Communists provide overt military assistance to Southeast Asian Communist elements, the United States should prevail upon the British to reverse their proffers of recognition to Communist China and to provide such military assistance as is practicable to assist the Burmese and/or the French in resisting Chinese Communist aggression. In addition:

"a. If overt military assistance is provided the Viet Minh forces of Indo-China, the United States should increase its ADAP assistance to the French and urge the French to continue an active defense, with the United States giving consideration to the provision of air and naval assistance.

"b. The United States should ask the United Nations to call upon member nations to make forces available to resist the Chinese Communist aggression."

Chinese Communist military moves against Southeast Asia states in the near future are possible and in such an event the U.S. should be prepared to provide military assistance short of actual participation of U.S. Armed Forces at this time.

d. On 14 July the J3PC submitted a report (J.C.S. 1924/20 - Not  
reclassified) for consideration by the JCS which included the  
following with reference to Southeast Asia:

"The French military position in Indo-China has continued to improve. . . . No unusual Chinese Communist or Vietnamese activities have occurred since the Korean invasion. While the entire East Asia situation is potentially explosive there are no present indications that the situation will be immediately worsened unless the Korean situation further deteriorates. With respect to Burma, Thailand, and Malaya, internal subversive moves will probably remain the chief threats to the established governments. Chinese Communists would probably move against these countries only if first successful in Indo-China. . . ."

.. "a. Southeast Asia

"(1) In the event of Chinese Communist moves against Indo-China or Burma, U.S. military equipment and supplies would be required on an increased scale and U.S. naval and air forces might be called upon to assist the French in Indo-China. It is unlikely that U.S. forces would be employed in Burma. This is considered to be an area of British responsibility.

"(a) If Indo-China, Burma and Thailand were to fall under Communist domination, British forces in Malaya should be augmented. Except for possible naval support, it is unlikely that U.S. armed forces would be employed in Malaya since this is an area of British responsibility."



INCOMING TELEGRAM

FROM: Saigon

Rec'd: August 7, 1950  
7:10 p.m.

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 170, August 7, 5 p.m.

Survey mission has completed initial report on military assistance for Indochina which is being dispatched to FMACC by courier. Basically the French objectives appear to coincide with US objectives in the country. The military situation confronting the French in Indochina is internal against the Viet Minh and impending external against Communist China. The French forces after approximately 5 years of warfare are stalemated against Ho Chi Minh and appear to have lost considerable amount of offensive spirit. This failure to restore internal security is attributed by French to lack of cooperation of noncommunist people and deep seated hatred and distrust of French which exists among large part of the population. Military action alone cannot solve this internal security problem. A political solution which includes concessions on the part of France and definite plans possibly backed by the US or the UN for eventual independence if Vietnam Cambodia and Laos is a necessary complement to military action. The overall assistance (military, economic and political) requested up to this time is considered inadequate to fully consummate US broad objectives in Indochina and assistance will have to be provided to the French Indochina on an increased scale to resist the encroachment of Communism in SEA. . . .

HEATH

JAK:RFB



OUTGOING TELEGRAM

AMLEGATION

September 1, 1950.

SAIGON

NO 238

DEPT has viewed growing signs of POLIT and MIL deterioration in Indochina with increasing concern. The failure of the Vietnam GOVT and its leaders to inspire support, the slow pace of the Pau CONF and inability or disinclination of Bao Dai to assume leadership as exemplified by his prolonged stay in FR are among disturbing POLIT factors. Of even greater immediate import are MIL considerations - the increasing indications of CHI COMMIE-Viet Minh military collaboration and ever present threat of CHI invasion.

Whatever prompt action we can take ourselves or recommend to FR to stem unfavorable tide must bear FOL objectives in mind: 1) Have sufficient dramatic impact to stir all factions of Vietnamese POLIT thought, preferably to extent of swaying fence sitters;

2) Serve to repudiate claim that FR are not sincere in implementing MAR 8th Accords and are using "independence within FR Union" as a cloak for colonialism;

3) Have sufficient psychological attraction to nationalists to appease, at least temporarily, their hunger for further evidences of autonomy;

4) Will not in any way jeopardize the already inadequate FR and allied MIL potential in Indochina;

5) Attract other potential non-COMMIE combatant units (Cao Daists, Hoa Hao, Catholics) to side of FR Union troops;

6) Cause no further depletion of West EUR MIL potential and even improve it by releasing FR troops from service in IC.

DEPT concurs fully with Paris and Saigon that formation of NATL army; at least in Vietnam and possibly to lesser extent in Laos and Cambodia, is action which approaches closest to these requirements while still remaining within realm of possibility.

We are, nevertheless, conscious of complexity of technical and other problems involved in accomplishing task and aware that it might be matter of years before armies actually exist in usual sense. We, therefore, are seeking means whereby psychological benefits of action may begin to be harvested IMMED even though full realization must, in fact, be delayed. The FOL plan is therefore submitted for your study, comment and discussion with appropriate FR authorities and possibly Bao Dai.

1) At earliest moment it be solemnly (and simultaneously) declared by FR (Auriol?) and Bao Dai that in keeping with provisions of March 8 Accords, Vietnam NATL Army under command of Emperor will become fact and that all indigenous troops then serving in FR Union forces are incorporated into new NATL Army.

2) That pursuant to ART 3 of Mar 8 Accords it is declared that a state of NATL emergency exists and that His Majesty as Commander in Chief has therefore placed NATL forces under command of FR High Command in the face of threat of FON invasion.

3) That FOL emergency NATL Army will be released from service under FR command to resume fundamental task of assuring internal order, etc., and that in meanwhile officer and NCO training program will proceed.

These are bare outlines which if found feasible may later be enlarged to include invitation to other partisan forces to join colors, provide for Viet staff officers on FR staff, devise program for replacement FR officers by Viets, etc.

In suggesting such a plan DEPT does not seek to oversimplify problem or overlook drawbacks. It is realized that for the time being this will only be a paper transfer which will be SUBJ to customary Viet criticism of another

meaningless gesture. However, it wld legally establish a Viet Army presumably with distinctive insignia and to this extent represent a step forward. We believe need for action so great we must give consideration every possible action within practical limitations.

Nor does DEPT intend ignore obvious corollary Alphant Pleven request 200 billion francs two year period for establishment Natl Army. Paris may inform French this question receiving active consideration and comment thereon will be forthcoming soonest.

For UR CONF INFO matter of formation NATL Armies will be brought up in conjunction our discussions IC at FONMINCONF preliminaries of which commence today. UR and Paris recent reporting this related SUBJS of which UR 265 Aug 23 outstanding have been very helpful.

ACHESON

FE:PSA:DMCoors  
WMGibson



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October 11, 1950

SOUTHEAST ASIA AID POLICY COMMITTEE

Proposed Statement of U.S. Policy on  
Indo-China for NSC Consideration

The attached paper, prepared by the Department of Defense and the Office of Philippine and Southeast Asian Affairs of the Department of State, is a revision and expansion of the brief draft statement considered by the Committee on October 6. It is now being considered by the JCS.

Martin G. Cramer  
Secretary

C O P Y

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARIES OF STATE AND DEFENSE

FROM: Southeast Asia Aid Policy Committee

The Committee is submitting for approval by higher authority, the attached draft joint memorandum to the National Security Council on Indochina. This draft joint memorandum contains a statement of U.S. policy with respect to Indochina. It is the Committee's view that the U.S. Government should decide, in principle, to contribute, in whatever ways are feasible and desirable, to the formation of national armies in Indochina. Such a contribution appears to the Committee as the most effective method by which the U.S. can, at present, strengthen the security of Indochina and add to its stabilization.

The Committee would like to point out that the extent and character of the contribution which the U.S. might consider furnishing for the formation of national armies in Indochina can only be determined by negotiations between officials of the French and U.S. Governments, on a ministerial level. During the course of those negotiations French officials may be expected to present, for the first time, detailed information on their plans for the formation of these armies. Approval of the draft joint memorandum would provide the authorization from the President for U.S. representatives to consider and act with full knowledge of the plans of the French.

It is recommended that, if negotiations are conducted with representatives of the French Government, U.S. representatives secure French acceptance of the following conditions which shall attach to the extension of U.S. assistance in the formation of national armies in Indochina: (1) French Union forces would not be withdrawn from Indochina until such Associated States armies were fully trained and ready to act effectively in replacement; (2) France would not decrease its outlays for Indochina below the 1950 rate during the period of the American military aid requested; (3) the national armies projects would have the approval of the three Associated States governments; (4) the High Commissioner for Indochina, the French Command, and the three Associated States would maintain full consultative relations with the Legation and MAAG during the period of the formation of the armies.

If approved, this joint memorandum would provide the measures called for by NSC 64 - "Position of the U.S. with Respect to Indochina", approved by the President on 23 April 1950. It is understood that the draft of this joint memo will be reviewed by the JCS before it is finally approved by the Secretary of Defense.

C O P Y



DRAFT STATEMENT OF U. S. POLICY ON INDOCHINA  
FOR USG CONSIDERATION  
(Reference NSC 64, NSC 73/4)

1. Firm non-Communist control of Indochina is of critical, strategic importance to U. S. national interests. The loss of Indochina to Communist forces would undoubtedly lead to the loss of Southeast Asia as stated in NSC 64. In this respect, the National Security Council accepts the strategic assessment of Southeast Asia which the Joint Chiefs of Staff made on 10 April 1950 (Annex No. 1.).

2. Regardless of current U. S. commitments for provision of certain military assistance to Indochina, the U. S. will not commit any of its armed forces to the defense of Indochina against overt, foreign aggression, under present circumstances. In case of overt aggression, the Department of Defense will immediately re-assess the situation, in the light of the then existing circumstances.

3. To strengthen the security of Indochina against external aggression and augmented internal Communist offensives, the Joint Chiefs of Staff are authorized to conduct military talks with U. K. and French military commanders in the Far East. Such talks would seek, first, an agreed military plan for the internal defense of Indochina and, second, the coordination of operations in Southeast Asia in the event of invasion. Such talks should clearly indicate to French authorities that increases in U.S. military aid will be

provided

C O P Y

provided in accordance with operational plans which are acceptable to the U. S. and are compatible with U. S. capabilities in the light of other U. S. commitments.

4. The U. S. should secure plans from the French and the Associated States for, and assist the French and the Associated States in the prompt acceleration of the formation of new national armies of the three Associated States (Annex No. 3 contains descriptive information on the magnitude of such plans). The employment of such armies would be for the purpose of maintaining internal security with a view to releasing the bulk of the French forces in Indochina for other duties, in accordance with the strategic plan for the defense of Indochina. In due course, as these national armies are able to assume responsibility for the functions of national defense, the U. S. will favor the phased withdrawal from Indochina of French forces in order to strengthen the defense of Metropolitan France under the NATO arrangements. U. S. and French support for the formation of national armies in Indochina should be given wide and vigorous publicity. Since it is a policy of the United States (NSC 48/2) to use its influence in Asia toward resolving the colonial-nationalist conflict in such a way as to satisfy the fundamental demands of the Nationalist movement, while at the same time minimizing the strain on the colonial powers who are our Western allies, the U. S. should, for the time being, continue to press the French to carry out, in letter and spirit, the agreements of March 8, 1949 and the conventions of December 30, 1949 providing for self-government within the French Union.

5. Since

5. since the security of the Associated States of Indochina will be affected, to some extent, by the capabilities of neighboring or nearby countries to resist Communist encroachments, the U.S. should use its influence, wherever appropriate, to promote close relations and firm understandings, in political, military and economic fields, among the Associated States and Thailand, Burma and the Philippines. In particular, the U.S. should seek to envelope full diplomatic relations between the Associated states and other countries in Southeast Asia, collaboration among military staff officers of these countries on the security of neighboring or adjacent frontiers, and effective agreements on the control of arms smuggling and the movement of subversive agents. The U.S. continues to favor the entry of the three Associated states into the United Nations. As a culmination of these efforts the U.S. should encourage the Associated States, in due course, to participate in such arrangements for regional security under Article 51 and 52 of the United Nations' Charter, as will effectively contribute to the common defense of the area.

6. The U.S. will have to devote substantial resources if the policies stated above are to be carried out effectively enough to assist in strengthening the security of Indochina. It is impossible at this time to set the exact cost in dollars to the United States of the formation of the national armies. When the details of the U.S. contribution have been determined, after discussions with representatives

of France

COPY



of France and the Associated States, The U.S. plan for assisting in the formation of the National Armies of Indochina will be submitted to the National Security Council for approval.

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STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

1. On 10 April 1950, the Joint Chiefs of Staff made the following strategic assessment of Southeast Asia, including Indochina:

"4. The mainland states of Southeast Asia also are at present of critical strategic importance to the United States because:

a. They are the major sources of certain strategic materials required for the completion of United States stock pile projects;

b. The area is a crossroad of communications;

c. Southeast Asia is a vital segment in the line of containment of communism stretching from Japan southward and around to the Indian Peninsula. The security of the three major non-Communist base areas in this quarter of the world--Japan, India, and Australia--depends in a large measure on the denial of Southeast Asia to the Communists. If Southeast Asia is lost, these three base areas will tend to be isolated from one another;

d. The fall of Indochina would undoubtedly lead to the fall of the other mainland states of Southeast Asia. Their fall would:

(1) Require changing the Philippines and Indonesia from supporting positions in the Asian offshore island chain to front-line bases for the

defense

defense of the Western Hemisphere. It would also call for a review of the strategic deployment of United States forces in the Far East; and

(2) Bring about almost immediately a dangerous condition with respect to the internal security of the Philippines, Malaya, and Indonesia, and would contribute to their probable eventual fall to the Communists;

e. The fall of Southeast Asia would result in the virtually complete denial to the United States of the Pacific littoral of Asia. Southeast Asian mainland areas are important in the conduct of operations to contain Communist expansion;

f. Communist control of this area would alleviate considerably the food problem of China and would make available to the USSR important strategic materials. In this connection, Soviet control of all the major components of Asia's war potential might become a decisive factor affecting the balance of power between the United States and the USSR. 'A Soviet position of dominance over Asia, Western Europe, or both, would consistute a major threat to United States security'; and

g. A Soviet position of dominance over the Far East, could also threaten the United States position in Japan

since

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since that country could thereby be denied its Asian .  
markets, sources of food and other raw materials. The  
feasibility of retention by the United States of its  
Asian offshore island bases could thus be jeopardized."

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MILITARY SITUATION IN INDOCHINA

1. View of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In a memorandum of 7 September to the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff stated the following:

"Prior to 1 January 1951, the currently planned level of United States military aid to the French and native allied forces of Indochina should increase their military capabilities but not to the extent of counterbalancing Viet Minh capabilities. In view of these considerations, the Joint Chiefs of Staff suggest that the proposed United States position take cognizance that the situation in Indochina is to be viewed with alarm and that urgent and drastic action is required by the French if they are to avoid military defeat in Indochina. Such a setback would not only be detrimental to the prestige of the French and the United States but it could also jeopardize the United States military position in Asia."

2. Conclusions of Joint MDAP Survey Mission, After observing conditions in north and south Indochina, General Erskine, Chief of the Military Group of the Joint MDAP Survey Mission in Southeast Asia, reported the following conclusions on 5 August 1950:

- "(a) Military assistance will have to be provided to the French in Indo-China on a considerable scale if the broad objective of assisting in resisting the encroachment of Communism in Southeast Asia is to be successfully achieved. The assistance which has been requested, up to this time, is considered inadequate to fully consummate the U.S. broad objective. Additional material and equipment will require additional personnel.
- "(b) The French forces in Indo-China, after approximately five years of warfare, are stalemated. Casualties in this type of warfare have been very high.
- "(c) The French Command and troops, after a very brief study and observations, appear to have lost a considerable amount of offensive spirit and have been frustrated in their efforts to restore internal security.

- "(d) The failure of the French to restore internal security is attributed to the lack of cooperation on the majority of the people in Indo-China and a deep-seated hatred and distrust which exists among a large part of the population. A large measure of the distrust and non-cooperative action on the part of the people has undoubtedly been inspired by Communist propaganda and the desire of the Oriental to 'push the white man out of Asia.'
- "(e) Military action alone can not solve the internal security problem in Indo-China because of the lack of cooperation on the part of the people, the distrust and hatred of the French, and the effect of Communist activities and propaganda. A political solution, which includes concessions on the part of the French, and definite plans for eventual independence of Viet Nam is a necessary complement to military action.
- "(f) The failure to organize Viet Nam armed forces as a separate entity and employ them as Vietnamese troops, not as French Union troops, has been the source of much dissatisfaction on the part of the people and has created a considerable amount of distrust which has withdrawn the support of many people from French efforts.
- "(g) The Viet Minh still controls the major portion of Indo-China and, for all practical purposes, have the French forces pinned to their occupied and garrisoned areas to the extent that French movement is impossible through practically all areas without armed escort.
- "(h) The Viet Minh forces have steadily grown in strength and improved their discipline and combat effectiveness. Much of the success in these fields can be attributed to assistance and supplies from the Chinese Communists and Communist propaganda.
- "(i) A serious and dangerous external threat from Communist China exists along the northern frontier.
- "(j) The French forces disposed throughout Indo-China, with their present equipment and organization, are not capable of dealing with the Viet Minh within the borders of Indo-China and resisting a strong Chinese Communist attack from the north. The defenses along the frontier of Tonkin

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are weak and inadequate. The absence of artificial obstacles, demolition plans and adequate mobile reserves, adequate aircraft support, and the very small amount of artillery, which is now disposed so that it is impracticable to coordinate and mass fires, appear to be the most outstanding weaknesses in the Tonkin area. Another important deficiency is to lack of sufficient personnel now available. Anti-tank defenses in the Tonkin area are practically non-existent. The Viet Minh activities in this area will probably prevent the free movement of such reserves as are now available there."

### 3. CIA Estimate of the Prospects for Chinese Communist Action in Indochina During 1950 (ORE 50-50, 7 September 1950)

"Communist China at present possesses the capability for a successful invasion of Indochina. If Communist China, as a participant in the world Communist movement, were called upon to invade Indochina, it could probably be persuaded to initiate such an operation. Chinese Communist military commitments elsewhere would not necessarily militate against an invasion of Indochina because the Chinese Communists possess the forces necessary for military action - separately or simultaneously - against Indochina, Korea, Taiwan, Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macao.

"Despite this general capability and despite the existence of Chinese Communist military concentrations along the Indochina border, adequate for the task, it is estimated that an open Chinese Communist invasion - While possible and capable of being launched with little or no preliminary warning - is improbable in 1950 because considerations (from the standpoint of Ho Chi Minh, the Chinese Communists, and international Communism) favoring such action appear to be outweighed by considerations opposing it. It is highly probable, however, that the Chinese Communists will continue to expand military assistance to the Viet Minh forces (by measures short of open invasion) on a scale sufficient to provide those forces with the capability of achieving significant, but limited, objectives in 1950 and assuming that the French receive no more aid than is presently programmed, of eventually expelling the French without the aid of a Chinese Communist invasion."

### 4. Chinese Communist Military Capabilities (ORE 50-50)

"Any invasion of Indochina by the Chinese Communists would probably be undertaken in cooperation with the forces of Ho Chi Minh. Sizable Chinese Communist military forces are in position to intervene in Indochina. Despite reports of actual and scheduled northward movements of certain Chinese Communist field forces, approximately 100,000 troops remain deployed along the Indochinese border. These units could launch an invasion of Indochina without

appreciable forewarning. Although reliable reports do not indicate the presence of armored units on the Indochina border, a division of armored cars, plus a battalion of tanks attached to the Fourth Field Army, are stationed in South China within 700 miles of the frontier. Moreover, approximately 150,000 additional Chinese Communist troops could arrive at the Indochina border within ten days to bolster initial invading forces. Even in the event of a simultaneous assault on Taiwan, these reinforcements would be available and would bring the potential invading force to a total of at least 250,000 troops. In view of the Chinese Communists' improving capability for waterlift, it is possible that some Invasion forces might be moved by sea to Viet Minh-held sections of the Indochina coast. There is no evidence, however, of Chinese Communist preparations for such a move.

"Although there have been no indications of any significant build-up of Chinese Communist Air Force strength in Southwest China and although this air force has not yet appeared in combat, the estimated 200-250 operational combat types (including fighters and light bombers) in the Chinese Communist Air Force could furnish effective air support to operations in Indochina. There are six airfields in China within 170 miles of the Tonkin border. In addition, construction of new airfields and the restoration of others in Southwest China are reportedly in progress in the Tonkin Kwangsi border area and on Heinan Island."

#### 5. Viet Minh Military Capabilities (ORE 50-50)

"The forces of Ho Chi Minh, which have been engaged in resistance activities against the French since September 1945, are capable of expanding their operations. Ho's organization, commonly known as the 'Viet Minh', possesses approximately 92,500 regular troops and an estimated 130,000 irregulars. The Viet Minh forces include 2,000 Khmer Issarak in Cambodia and 500 Issaraks in Laos.

"The Viet Minh forces are geared primarily for guerrilla warfare. The demonstrated effectiveness of a few task forces, each totaling as many as three to five thousand men and equipped with adequate infantry weapons and some artillery, points to a developing capability for more conventional warfare. Under present circumstances, the Viet Minh should have little difficulty in maintaining relative freedom of action throughout most of Indochina while simultaneously supporting pockets of resistance within French-occupied territory and continuing to harass French lines of communication. In addition, the Viet Minh is capable of seizing one or more French border outposts and holding them for a short time at least.

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"Following the de jure recognition of the 'Democratic Republic of Vietnam' by Communist China and the USSR, a general plan for closer collaboration between the Chinese Communists and the Viet Minh probably was formulated. As many as 10 to 20 thousand Viet Minh troops are being trained in Communist China. There is evidence that the Chinese Communists have supplied the Viet Minh with significant quantities of material, probably confined to small arms, ammunition, mortars, and light artillery. Access to training facilities in Communist China, the expansion of routes and facilities for supply, and the possibility of accelerating recruitment give the Viet Minh the potential capabilities for initiating a large-scale offensive against the French at an early date."

#### 6. Capabilities of French-Controlled Forces (ORE 50-50)

"French ground, naval and air forces in Indochina are under the operational control of GHEQ, Armed Forces in the Far East (FAEO). As of 1 July 1950 French regular ground forces totalled approximately 150,500 men. An estimated 66,700 troops in the armies of the Associated States, although subject to the nominal political control of these states, are under FAEO operational control. In addition there are 122,500 quasi-military and miscellaneous indigenous troops under over-all FAEO control. Of these local forces, only the Vietnamese army, at present weak and ineffective, has the potential for developing into a significant force. French ground forces are capable of penetrating the Viet-Minh held areas of Indochina but at the expense of garrison strength engaged in pacification duties elsewhere. The French have demonstrated a lack of aggressiveness. The French-controlled ground forces have a dual problem - the elimination of the Viet Minh forces and the defense of the China border. Indications are that current emphasis is on the former. Under these circumstances, the most they can hope to achieve in the immediate future is the destruction of enemy supply caches and the consequent postponement of a large-scale Viet Minh offensive.

"The strength of the French Air Force in Indochina, which is severely strained by its actions against Viet Minh forces, presently totals 84 fighters and fighter-reconnaissance aircraft, 68 transports and 50 liaison planes. The level of serviceability of fighter aircraft, now about 55 percent, will probably continue to drop as maintenance shortages become more acute. Many of the French air installations - few in number and generally in poor condition - are vulnerable to sabotage and some even to direct Viet Minh attack.

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"French naval forces are adequate for supporting the army in small-scale amphibious operations and for conducting raids against the rebel-held sections of the Indochina coast. Their inability to maintain a complete blockade of the coast is demonstrated by the extent of over-water arms smuggling now in progress. French Naval Forces, Far East, stationed in Indochina, consist of 166 small craft and ships and 21 aircraft manned by 8,750 personnel. Vessels in the most important categories currently stationed in Indochina waters include one old cruiser, 11 fleet minesweepers, two LST's, nine submarine chasers of various types and a number of supporting service and repair craft. Naval aircraft include nine patrol bombers and 12 reconnaissance aircraft."

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INFORMATION ON THE FORMATION OF NATIONAL  
ARMIES OF THE ASSOCIATED STATES

1. General Considerations. The organization and utilization of manpower in the non-Communist countries of Asia is possibly the key to the successful development of the security of Indochina and of Asia. In several years of warfare, the French have discovered that the Vietnamese fighting for Ho Chi Minh provided tough and persistent forces. The military campaign in Korea has demonstrated that Koreans can handle modern weapons and conduct sustained offensive and defensive operations. It may be presumed that Communist China, under the tutelage of often reported Soviet assistance, in developing integrated armies along modern lines. In addition, it would appear that Communist China has, for some time, actively benefited the North Korean armies and now is training and equipping the Viet Minh for operations in Indochina. The basic problem for the western powers is to find ways and means to utilize the manpower resources of Asia in order that the military forces of the west are not committed to actions in areas of limited or less strategic importance.

2. The French Position. On 17 August 1950, U.S. Ambassador Bruce, in Paris, reported to the Department of State that Premier Pleven, in discussing with him the situation in Indochina, had stated that (a) the only possible solution was to build up a strong and sufficient native army to make possible the gradual withdrawal of the French army for use

in Europe, (b) this was the only program that would convince the people of the three Associated States of Indochina "of the honesty of French intentions to give them full independence within the French Union," and (c) the French Government would welcome the replacement of French troops by indigenous forces and would aid in every way possible short of assuming an added financial burden which would directly impair its ability to increase its forces in Western Europe. Premier Plevin further stated that it was impossible for the French Government to implement this program due to the lack of funds.

On 22 September, the French Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense informed the Secretaries of State and Defense of "the need to create immediately powerful national Indochinese armies due to necessity of repatriating as many French forces as possible, since 20 percent of French regular officers and 40 percent of French noncoms were frozen in Indochina." Schuman and Moch stated that there were 72,000 men in local armies but "the desired substantial increase in this number would present budgetary problems which neither France nor the Associated States could presently meet."

Although the French have stated their objective, they have not, as yet, provided the U.S. Government with any firm figures on the size or the costs of the proposed National Armies. The French High Commissioner in Saigon has frequently used the figure of a regular Vietnamese forces of 120,000 men to be organized by July 1951.



3. Views of the U.S. Minister in Saigon. On 19 September, Minister Heath, in Saigon, reported as follows:

"There is little doubt in our minds here that if we are to find a fairly rapid cure for this 'civil war' which invites further Chinese intervention, native forces in the field must be greatly increased. This will, of course, involve more equipment and cash. Legation cannot state, of course, whether or how much it would be possible for French Government to increase its cash outlay in Indochina at this time. French finances might be able to afford some increase in their Indochina budgets. If they cannot, however, meet full bill for maintenance of increased national army and urgently needed pacification troops, then we shall be obliged to contribute some direct financial aid if we want this dangerously festering situation cleared up. I trust that French delegate now in Washington can provide prompt estimates as to French and Associated States financial possibilities in this regard.

"Politically, I strongly hold opinion that purpose of national army concept will be dissipated unless Vietnam (and Cambodia and Laos as well) are brought into discussions, their wishes consulted and their desires met to the extent that military efficiency will permit. In this connection President Huu's most recent press conference, in which he declared that only Viet forces could obtain necessary rallying and pacification brought him close to position advocated by nationalists of Nguyen Phen Long-Lam Viet stripe. Key figure in such consultations will, of course, be Bao Dai and I cannot emphasize too insistently my belief that the U.S. should make no definite large-scale commitments

for the support of the national army project without consultation with Bao Dai and determination exactly where he stands and what role he proposes to assume vis-a-vis the Viet national army.

"Finally, but with equal importance, I would strongly urge that definition of U.S. participation in policy and strategic decisions affecting the use of national armies and of American assistance furnished to them accompany any underwriting of the sort French have requested. This participation would involve continuing consultative relationships with French commanding general, with French military missions to the Associated States and with the high military committee and cannot be worked out, in its initial phases, away from Indochina."

4. Summary of Non-Communist Indigenous Forces in Indochina.

According to the military agreements concluded between France and the Governments of the three Associated States, in 1949, the French High Command retains operational control over all military and security forces in Indochina as long as an emergency exists. The total number of non-Communist forces in Indochina, French and indigenous, amounts to 340,000 troops. French ground forces number about 150,000. These include 44,000 indigenous regulars. The remainder of the total forces, amounting to some 190,000, are divided approximately as follows:

Vietnamese Regulars	28,200
Vietnamese Auxiliaries	29,000
Royal Khmer Army (Cambodia)	6,900
Laotian National Army	2,600
Forces of the Racial Minorities	4,500
Semimilitary Forces	78,000
FTEO Auxiliaries	<u>40,000</u>
Total non-Communist Native Forces	189,200

The Vietnamese Regulars and Auxiliaries, the Royal Khmer Army, and the Laotian National Army constitute some 66,000 troops armed and trained to restore and maintain internal security. The other categories in the above list are essentially local police or militia. The 66,000 troops presumably would form the nucleus for the expanded national armies.

C O P Y



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

13 October 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL MALONY

I have been reading over the draft statement of US policy on Indochina, in the light of the message which the French Premier sent Defense Minister Moch, who gave it to Secretary Marshall. This message, along with other French expressions, highlights the crux of the Indochina problem - the French are trying too little, too late, and not very hard. They have shown no vigorous leadership nor enlightened capacity. This observation leads to a number of implacable principles regarding U.S. policy on Indochina.

We must avoid, at all costs, the commitment of U.S. armed forces, even in a token or small scale fashion, for combat operations. Such a commitment would lead the French to shake off responsibilities and show even less initiative in Indochina. There are too many undone things to even consider such a commitment at this stage. And, even as a last resort, there would be serious objections to such a commitment from the U.S. point of view. U.S. officials must be on guard against French attempts to pressure or panic us into some sort of a commitment. Failing to get a satisfactory statement from the U.S., the French, over the next few months, may try a little psychological warfare on us. They may speak hopelessly of a coming Dunkirk. They may intimate the necessity to come to an understanding with the Chinese Communists. They may threaten to throw the problem into the United Nations, either in a political or a military way. The best defense against such tactics will be to make the French pull themselves up by their own efforts.

All the current phases of the Indochina problem seem to lead to the conclusion that the proposed military staff talks will provide the most effective leverage for reversing the present defeatist management of the military aspect of Indochina. Our talks with the military representatives in

CC: Mr. Dickinson, Jt Secretaries

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Washington were unproductive since it was impossible to discuss the actual situation in Indochina. The French Government in Paris has not yet been stunned into forthright and vigorous action. It is my impression that the U.S. Government has not yet spoken frankly and bluntly to the French regarding Indochina. Consequently, the staff talks should provide such an opportunity.

The draft statement of U.S. policy in Indochina is weak from the political side. In the drafting stage the Defense representatives argued for a strong, hard-hitting policy on political and economic concessions. The State Department representatives flatly refused and continued to refuse to consider Indochina in that manner. Consequently, the paper ended with a compromise. However, consideration should be given to making any large scale military, political and economical aid program conditional - the French taking vigorous political measures and reforms in Indochina. As it now stands, military aid will be given when its use appears acceptable to U.S. military authorities, from the military point of view. The conditional factor should be introduced with the French on a ministerial level so that the French Government knows of the American position in this matter. With respect to political measures and reforms, the Department of Defense is beyond this jurisdiction. However, we should have specific measures in mind since the State Department representatives reiterated their question "What more can be done in a political way in Indochina?"

Finally, we must resolve the problem of influencing the French to take a number of steps in Indochina, on the one hand, without our assuming the responsibility for the success or failure of the overall program to strengthen Indochina's security.

K. T. Young

C O P Y

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FOR THE PRESS

OCTOBER 17, 1950  
No. 1066

In the course of conversations which have taken place during the last few days between Messrs. Dean G. Acheson, Secretary of State; John W. Snyder, Secretary of the Treasury; George C. Marshall, Secretary of Defense; and William C. Foster, Economic Cooperation Administration, on behalf of the United States, and Messrs. Jules Moch, Minister of Defense; and Maurice Petsche, Minister of Finance, on behalf of France, a review has been made of the United States contribution to the implementation of the French Rearmament Program within the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This review has included the question of additional United States military aid to Indochina.

The United States Government has expressed the view that a military effort of the general magnitude and character planned by the French Government would be a vital contribution to the defensive strength of the North Atlantic area. Out of the sums appropriated by the United States Congress under the Mutual Defense Assistance Act for fiscal years 1950 and 1951, about \$5 billions have been earmarked for military equipment to be delivered to the European members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. France has been assigned by far the largest single part of these amounts.

In addition, the United States Congress has appropriated for military assistance in the Far East approximately one-half billion dollars. In view of the importance of the operations in Indochina, the major part of this sum is being used to provide military equipment, including light bombers, for the armed forces both of France and of the Associated States of Indochina.

This assistance will provide a very important part of the equipment required by the forces contemplated for activation in 1951 in France and for current operations in Indochina. Deliveries of equipment are being expedited and, with respect to Indochina, a particularly high priority has been assigned.

Moreover, the following agreement has been reached during the talks with respect to production assistance:



(a) On an interim basis, and within the funds already appropriated under the Mutual Defense Assistance Act by the Congress for the fiscal year 1951, the Government of the United States will make available in support of the French Government's increased military production program assistance in the amount of \$200 million, those funds to be obligated prior to June 30, 1951.

(b) The final amount of American assistance to support the expanded French defense effort will, subject to future provision of funds by the Congress, be determined on the basis of multi-lateral discussions within the framework of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization directed toward an equitable distribution among all the North Atlantic Treaty members of the economic burdens of the common rearmament effort.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Informal State-Defense Meeting on Indochina,  
17 October 1950, 1000 hours

Participants: General Harry Malony, Defense Member of  
Southeast Asia Aid Policy Committee  
Mr. K. T. Young, Office of Foreign Military  
Affairs, Department of Defense  
Commander E. Talman, Office of Military  
Assistance, Department of Defense  
Mr. William B. Lacy, Director, Philippine  
and Southeast Asian Affairs, State Department  
Mr. Robert Hoey, Officer-in-Charge, Indochinese  
Affairs, State Department  
Captain G. A. Lange, CP-35, Department of  
Navy  
Lt. Colonel Jack B. Matthews, International  
Branch, G-3, Department of Army  
Colonel F. Barnes, Policy Division, Air  
Force Operations  
Mr. George Doyle, Policy Division, Air Force  
Operations

1. Meeting was held to recapitulate the talks with the French, to analyze Saigon's views on the Indochina situation, and to review the proposed NSC policy statement on Indochina.

2. Talks With the French Ministers and Staff. According to available information, the principal results of talks with the French on their military budget were as follows, with respect to Indochina:

(a) Total budget for Indochina - 203 billion francs, or approximately \$600,000,000. This is an increase of 60 billion francs over the 1950 budget. This increase is not directly related to the formation of the National Armies. It includes a deficit of 35 billion francs carried over from 1950, which was due, in part, to payment for native troops. It was difficult to get adequate explanation from the French of this increase. U.S. representatives stated that the budgetary assistance to make up the overall military deficit has no relation to the formation of the National Armies. In other words, the French could not take

a portion of whatever budgetary assistance is hereafter provided the French and apply it to equipping the National Army contingents.

(b) Major difference over 1950 is addition of about 20,000 indigenous troops. Increase in total troop strength is from 331,516 to 351,250. These figures were presented before the recent troop loss in Tonkin. The 20,000 increase is made up largely of the net addition of 18 battalions to the Vietnam Army. Equipment for this increase is over and above requests made to the Melby-Erskine Mission. Equipment for these 18 battalions is not included in the 1951 budget. It has not been programmed by the French. Apparently, the French do not give the formation of these battalions a very high priority. U.S. representatives emphasized to the French that equipment for the National Armies must come from the equipment requested of the Melby-Erskine Mission. The U.S. representatives also emphasized that, with respect to U.S. military assistance, the first concern was to equip French Union Forces to meet the immediate threat, but that the French could readjust the distribution of this equipment in such a way as to provide some materiel for the National Army contingents.

(c) French Ministers fully agree on formation of National Armies. They asked U.S. finance pay and maintenance, which U.S. representatives did not accept.

(d) The French accepted the U.S. suggestion that the distribution of U.S. equipment between French Union Forces and the National Army contingents shall be determined in collaboration with U.S. authorities in Saigon, i.e., General Brink. The State Department has included this point in a draft aide-memoire to the French Government to eliminate any possibility of misunderstanding.

(e) The French Ministers stated that no reduction in the Indochina budget was possible, that France is giving highest priority to equipment for Indochina, and that no evacuation of Tonkin is contemplated at the present time, but that any eventual evacuation will be taken only after consultation with the U.S. and the U.K.

(f) Defense Minister Moch asked for a squadron of B-26's which French authorities had requested of the Melby-Erskine Mission. Secretary Marshall informed Moch that 20 B-26's and 5 spares would be made available out of the U.S. pipeline to Korea. Delivery date is anticipated as early December, with some of the planes arriving in Indochina in November. The question of whether or not the French have the personnel and maintenance facilities for these planes was not raised with the French representatives.



(g) It is understood that the French are planning to send reinforcements urgently from France and North Africa to replace the losses incurred in the evacuation of Caobang. These reinforcements may include the 10,000 non-commissioned and enlisted personnel planned for normal replacement in Indochina. In addition, there is a report that General Carpentier has requested 15 battalions for immediate reinforcement.

3. Saigon's Analysis of Situation (CWIN 1276). Recommendations in para c add nothing that is not already in process in Washington, other than calling in the U.N. to put out the big fire. Mr. Lacy opposes referring the Indochina problem to the U.N. He read his memorandum of conversation (attached) with Counselor of the French Embassy on Saturday, October 14. He and Mr. Hoot briefly noted the State Department's proposed reply to Saigon's cable.

4. Estimate of the Situation. Today's State-Defense informal meeting developed the following opinions on the overall situation, based on current information:

Political:

(a) There is no evidence of a French intention to withdraw from Indochina. There is considerable evidence of a French intention to withdraw from Tonkin or a part thereof.

(b) There is strong evidence of a French intention to throw the Indochina problem into the U.N. (see attached memorandum of conversation on 14 October.)

(c) There is no new evidence of a French intention to make a deal with the Chinese Communists. It should be noted that French reports from Saigon, particularly from High Commissioner Pignon, have begun to emphasize the presence of large numbers of "Chinese troops" on the Vietnamese side of the frontier.

Military:

(a) It is expected that the French will evacuate the posts of Laokay and Longson, and the entire border area to the small post of Monkay on the coast. Since this post can be supplied by sea it is possible that the French may try to hold it.

(b) According to the most recent estimate of G-2, the French can hold the Delta area because of their superior fire power and air cover.

5. Draft Statement of NSC Policy. It was pointed out that this policy statement is now before the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Secretaries within the Department of Defense. The meeting today specifically did not consider the question of a commitment of U.S. armed forces since that question is beyond its authority and since the draft statement contains a policy statement on this question. It was the consensus of the meeting that the draft policy statement is quite adequate, even in the light of the deteriorating military situation which had been anticipated in the formulation of this draft statement. The meeting felt that the nub of the Indochina problem is this - "Can the French stabilize the military situation long enough to increase their troop strength sufficiently to match and overcome the rapidly growing manpower superiority of the Viet Minh?" Accordingly, the increase in available manpower is the primary need in Indochina. The draft statement of NSC policy addresses itself mainly to this problem. It was Mr. Lacy's opinion that this policy statement should be processed just as rapidly as possible.

6. General Malony emphasized the greatly increased importance of the forthcoming military staff talks with the French in the Far East; they may generate an invigorated determination to take the necessary measures to hold Indochina within the free world. The meeting felt that these talks should concentrate on Indochina and be held as soon as possible. Accordingly, it is necessary to obtain NSC consideration of Indochina shortly.

K. T. Young

Attachments - 2

D R A F T

AIDE-MEMOIRE

It is the understanding of the United States Government that the conversations between the French Ministers of Defense and Finance and the United States Secretaries of State and Defense produce the following results:

1. The Secretary of Defense informed the French Delegation the United States would dispatch to Indochina one squadron of B-26 bombers, these aircraft to be diverted from the American supply pipeline to the Korean Theater. The French Delegation was informed that these planes would be completely equipped for combat but that no American personnel would be involved in their operation after delivery had been accomplished. The French Delegation was advised that it would be impossible for logistic reasons to deliver these planes before December 1.

2. The Secretary of State advised the French Delegation that, without reference to the French request for budgetary assistance to Indochina in the amount of 60 billion francs, the United States Government would undertake to supply all those items identified in the French request for assistance of March 1950 as confirmed and supplemented by the Melby-Erskine report of August 1950. The French Delegation was further informed that, since it was apparent that the French request for 60 billion francs for budgetary assistance in Indochina bore no important relation to the project of forming large national armies in Indochina, the United States would expect the



French authorities to accomplish the equipment of the Indochinese national armies (described by the French Delegation to the American Delegation in preliminary conversations) out of the equipment to be supplied by the United States. The French Delegation pointed out that equipment for French Union Forces now engaged in combat took precedence over equipment for national armies; the Secretary of State observed that the United States Government considered the formation of national armies a prerequisite to the final military and political solution of the Indochinese problem and, therefore, the United States Government must emphasize its desire that the French authorities accomplish the formation and training of the national armies described by them and the equipment of those armies from the military assistance program based on French requests of March as confirmed and supplemented by the Melby-Erskine report.

3. The French Delegation was advised that the United States had assigned to the initial military assistance program to Indochina the highest priority; that delivery of equipment under this program, totalling about \$31 million, would be accomplished for the most part by the end of the year. The French Delegation was further assured by the Secretary of Defense and by the Secretary of State that the United States Government would assign the highest priority to the delivery of military assistance identified in the French request of March 1950 as confirmed and supplemented by the Melby-Erskine Report. The French Delegation stated that of its request of March 1950 the first three categories (a), (b), and (c) will have been supplied by the end of the year; that their next priority requirements were expressed in categories

(d), (e) and (f) in that order (the references are to the French request of March 1950).

4. It was agreed that the technical representatives of the French Delegation would meet immediately with the technical representatives of the Secretary of Defense to review present priority assignments to items embodied in the French program to the end that deliveries under that program conform to the realities of the military and political situation in Indochina as well as to the serious supply limitations under which the United States Government is now operating.

5. United States Government expressed the view, and the French Delegation appeared to agree, that the allocation of American military assistance as between armies of the French Union and national army contingents should be approved by French and American authorities in Indochina.

Department of State,  
Washington.

PAGES  
380-381  
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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

17 October 1950

IN REPLY REFER TO

OP-52742/10

MEMORANDUM OF INFORMATION

Subj: The Current Situation in French Indochina.

Annex: (A) Military Forces French Indochina.

1. The four year old military deadlock in Indochina has apparently been broken by the current Viet Minh offensive. This offensive action along the Sino-Tonkin border is forcing the French to withdraw to the Red River delta and is threatening the entire French position in northern Indochina. It now appears that the aid which Viet Minh have reportedly been receiving from the Chinese Communists over the past six months has been the deciding factor in breaking this stalemate in their favor.

2. The successful Viet Minh operations against Dong The on 10 September and more recently against the retreating French garrison from Cao Bang have revealed unexpected strength on the part of the Viet Minh. They have abandoned their former hit-and-run tactics and are now capable of conducting a coordinated offensive and in general of waging a conventional form of warfare. The French admit that the forces which recently wiped out almost all of 5,000 French troops on the highway between Cao Bang and Lang Son, were equal to the French in equipment, training and technique. Important factors in the Viet Minh success have been excellent artillery support, accurate anti-aircraft fire and good intelligence.

3. The recent operations have revealed serious weakness in French response, leadership, and intelligence. The French lack the mobile reserves needed to engage in offensive operations or to counter the current Viet Minh threat. This lack of reserves has become especially acute since the French lost the better part of seven battalions near Cao Bang during the week of 5 October 1950. Moreover the creation of a loyal Vietnamese National Army has not progressed sufficiently to release an adequate number of French forces for offensive operations. The French have been further handicapped by inadequate intelligence, resulting partly from a reluctance to fly reconnaissance missions over or near Chinese territory. Finally, the French have delayed in effecting necessary tactical withdrawals in time to prevent the garrisons of border posts from being overwhelmed by superior enemy forces.

4. The French High Command has now recognized the need to regroup its forces in anticipation of a sustained Viet Minh attack on Hanoi and Haiphong. This regrouping will make necessary the early evacuation of all border posts in N.B. Tonkin unless the recent French request for fifteen additional battalions from France is quickly granted. In this area nine French battalions with a maximum strength of 7,000 men, are now facing approximately 10,000-14,000 Viet Minh regulars. It is also doubtful that the N.B. Tonkin outposts can be held. There are estimated 3,000 French troops are surrounded by 4,000-5,000 Viet Minh forces.

5. French evacuation of the entire border area is likely to have certain serious consequences:

(a) It would eliminate the bulk of the logistic support needed by the

Subj: The Current Situation in French Indochina

Viet Minh for their counter-offensive against the main French positions in the Red River delta.

(b) It would reduce the field of vision of French intelligence.

(c) It would completely upset previous French plans for extending their hold on the rice-growing delta area of Tonkin.

(d) It would open up a corridor from the Viet Minh mountain stronghold in Tonkin into Laos.

(e) It would have an unfortunate psychological impact on the already deteriorating political situation tending to cause a large number of Vietnamese in areas under French control to seek an accommodation with the Viet Minh or even to revolt openly.

6. A review of the situation in Indochina in the light of recent developments leads to the following conclusions:

(a) French military and political efforts have failed to date to restore order in Indochina. The fall of Cao Bang to the Viet Minh without French resistance will probably encourage the Viet Minh forces to further aggressive action.

(b) No significant build-up of Chinese Communist ground and air forces has been reported in southern or northwestern China, although rehabilitation and construction of airfields and roads in the region is in progress.

(c) It is estimated that Viet Minh forces are building for a large-scale offensive to gain complete control in Indochina. This build-up is being fostered by aid from Chinese Communist sources in the fields of training and arms supply and, reportedly, by Soviet technical assistance.

(d) The Viet Minh attack and capture of Dong Khe and Pakey, and the subsequent withdrawal of French forces from Cao Bang and other border posts are considered indications that the initial phases of the offensive have commenced.

(e) A carefully planned Viet Minh offensive with clandestine participation by a portion of the 150,000 Chinese Communist troops in South China is more likely than an overt Chinese Communist invasion.

(f) The French are not considered capable of conducting an offensive in Tonkin, with troops and equipment presently available.

Subj: The Current Situation in French Indochina

(g) Prior to 1 January 1951, the present level of U.S. military aid to the French and native allied forces will increase their capabilities but not to the extent of counterbalancing the probable increase of Viet Minh capabilities.

(h) In summary, the Viet Minh intention to attack the French forces is established and the initial phase of the operation has commenced. It is estimated that the Viet Minh forces will continue to (1) attack isolated border posts and French lines of communications without committing large numbers of troops, (2) open additional supply routes to China, and (3) re-organize and consolidate their forces prior to launching an all out attack.

*John H. Johnson*

Chief of Staff, U.S. Navy

Director of Naval Intelligence

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# INDOCHINA FRENCH DOMINION

INDOCHINA FRENCH DOMINION

Personnel Strength: 353,970 Total

Army: 339,857

French Army Regulars: 150,667 (less 4,000 lost at Cao Bang)

Tonkin:	58,500 (41 battn)	)	(	French:	49,267
Annam:	23,500 (16 battn)	)	(	For. Legion:	18,500
Cochin China:	56,000 (23 battn)	)	(	IC Native:	44,000
Laos:	7,000	)	(	N. African:	25,100
Cambodia:	5,500	)	(	Senegalese:	13,600

Loyal Native Forces: 189,200

Permanent Vietnamese Army	28,200
(Paper strength; 9 mobile battns are in being; of these 5 are in operation)	
Vietnamese Militia (Suppletifs):	29,000
Laotian Army:	2,600
Cambodian Army:	6,900
Racial minority troops:	4,500
Semi-Military forces (plantation guards, etc.):	78,000
FTMO Auxiliaries (Suppletifs to regular French Army):	40,000

Navv: 8,754 (including 3,234 fuseliers marins)

Air Force: 5,349 (including 262 pilots)

Naval Vessels: 161 Total

Old Light Cruiser (OCL):	1
Gun Boats (GB):	1
Fleet Minesweeper (AM):	9
Motor Minesweeper (AMS):	10
Net Laying Ship (AN):	1
Seaplane Tender (AVP):	2
Hydrographic Vessel (AGS):	1
Tankers (AO & YOG):	2
Transport (AP):	1
Repair Ship (AR):	1

## Naval Vessels (Continued).

Ocean Tug (Fleet) (TF):	1
Landing Ship (Tank) (LST):	3 (1 en route)
Landing Ship (Support) (LSSH):	6 (en route)
Miscellaneous Landing Craft:	96 (13 en route)
Submarine Chaser (175') (PC):	5
Submarine Chaser (110') (SC):	6
Harbor Defense Launch (HP):	7
Harbor Tug (Little) (HTL):	7
Motor Fishing Vessel (MFV):	3

Aircraft: 252 Total

### Air Force

Fighters:	81
Transport:	60
Reconnaissance, Liaison, etc.	70

(40 additional F-8F planes expected to arrive from US in November)

### Naval

PT/MT:	9 (3 more scheduled for reassignment to FIC)
Sea Otter:	12

## VIET MINH FORCES

Regular Forces:	92,500 (166 battns)
Tonkin:	40,000 (76 battns)
	(War Office London estimate: 60,000)
Annam:	22,000 (46 battns)
Cochin China:	21,000 (41 battns)
Cambodia:	4,500 (including 2,000 Khmer Issarak)
Laos:	5,000 (including 500 Lao Issarak)
Irregular Forces:	130,000
People's Militia:	33,000 (66 battns)
Not organized in battn.	97,000

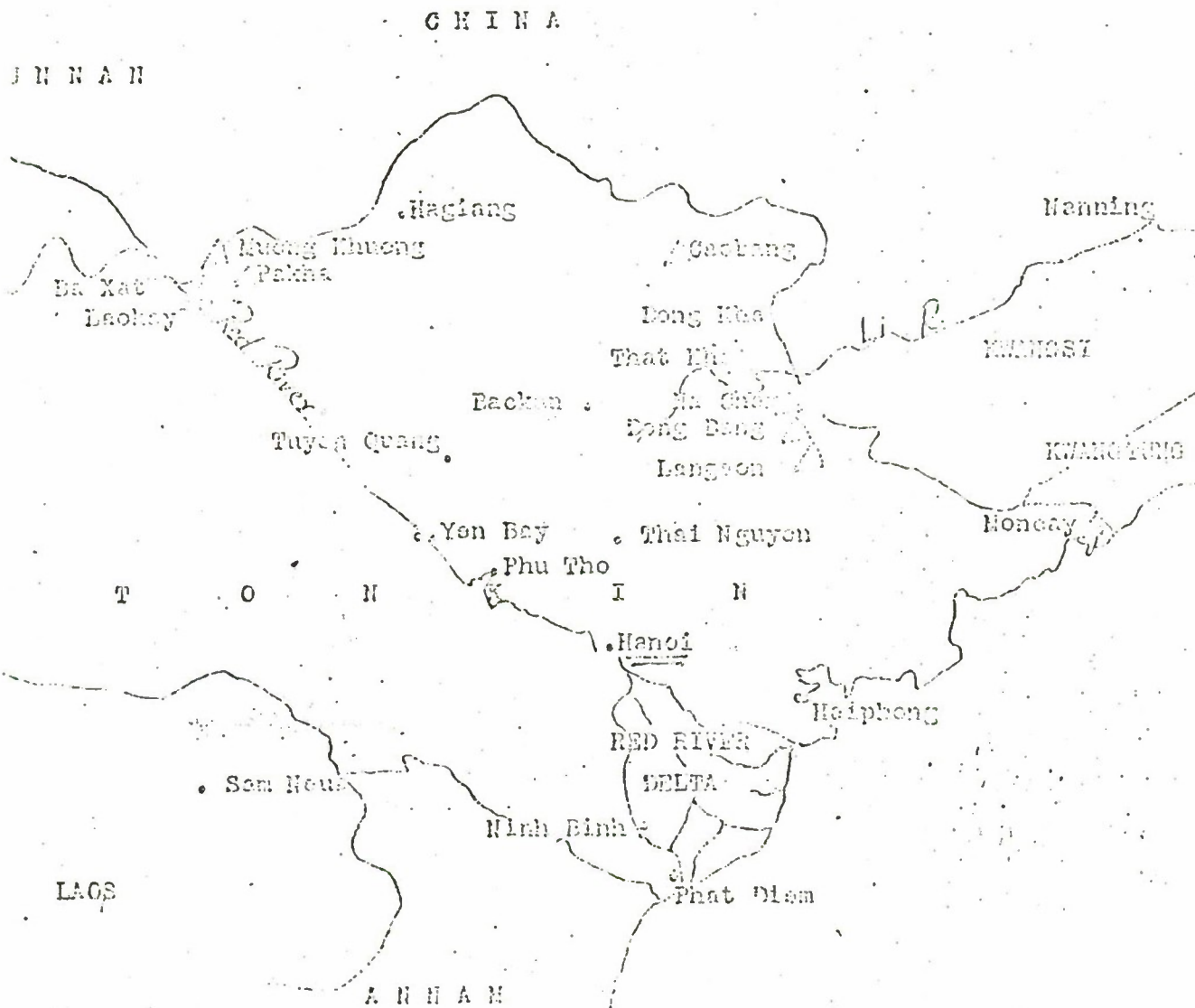
### N.B.

A French battalion is approximately 800 men strong.

A Viet Minh battalion is approximately 500 men strong.

TONKIN  
INDO-CHINA

0 100 miles



lost or gained during  
the last 24 hours  
French border posts still  
held.

S U L P  
O  
K H I N



OUTGOING TELEGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OCT 18 1950  
2 P.M.

PRIORITY

AMLEGATION

SAIGON

384

DEPT wishes to have FOL MSG delivered to Bao Dai personally by MIN IMED after Chief of State's arrival in Saigon. It SHLD be delivered informally without submission written text with sufficient emphasis to leave no doubt in Emperor's mind that it represents DEPTS studied opinion in matter now receiving ATTN highest auths US GOVT. Begin MSG:

Bao Dai will arrive in Saigon at moment when Vietnam is facing grave crisis outcome of which may decide whether country will be permitted develop independence status or pass in near future to one of Sino-Soviet dominated satellite, a new form of colony immeasurably worse than the old from which Vietnam has so recently separated herself.

The US GOVT is at present moment taking steps to increase the AMT of aid to FR Union and ASSOC States in their effort to defend the territorial integrity of IC and prevent the incorporation of the ASSOC States within the COMINT-dominated bloc of slave states but even the resources of US are strained by our present UN commitments in Korea, the need for aid in the defense of Western Europe and our own rearmament program. We sometimes find it impossible to furnish aid as we WLD wish in a given AMT at a given time and in a given place.

Leadership of Vietnam GOVT during this crucial period is a factor of preponderant importance in deciding ultimate outcome. GOVT must display unusually aggressive leadership and courage before a discouraged people, distraught and floundering in the wake of years of civil war. Lesser considerations concerning the modalities of relations between the States of the FR Union and the REP of FR must, for instance, be at least temporarily laid aside in face of serious threat to very existence of Vietnam as autonomous state, within FR Union or otherwise.

We are aware (as is Bao Dai) that present Vietnamese GOVT is so linked with person of Chief of State that leadership and example provided by latter takes on extraordinary importance in determining degree of efficiency in functioning of GOVT. Through circumstances of absence in FR of Bao Dai and other Vietnamese leaders for prolonged period, opportunity for progress in assumption of responsibilities from FR and extension authority and influence of GOVT with people was neglected. Many people, including great number AMERS, have been unable understand reasons for Emperor's GTE prolonged holiday UNQTE on Riviera and have misinterpreted it as an indication of lack of patriotic attachment to his role of Chief of State. DEPT is at least of opinion that his absence did not enhance the authority and prestige of his GOVT at home.

Therefore, DEPT considers it imperative Bao Dai give Vietnamese people evidence his determination personally take up reins of state and lead his country into IMMED and energetic opposition COMHE menace. Specifically he SHLD embark upon IMMED program of visits to all parts Vietnam making numerous speeches and public apperances in the process. Chief of State SHLD declare his determination plunge into job of rallying people to support of GOVT and opposition to VM IMMED upon arrival Saigon. He SHLD announce US, FR support for formation NATL armies and his own intention assume role Commander in Chief. He SHLD take full advantage of FR official declaration of intention to form NATL armies (confirmed yesterday by MIN ASSC States Letourneau) and set up precise plan for such formation IMMED.

Finally, it SHLD be tactfully suggested that any further display procrastination in facing realities in the form prolonged periods of seclusion at Dalat or otherwise WLD confirm impressions of those not as convinced of Emperor's seriousness of purpose as DEPT and LEG are and raise questions of the wisdom of continuing to support a Vietnamese GOVT which proves itself incapable of exercising the autonomy acquired by it at such a high price. End of MSG.

Endeavor obtain private interview soonest possible after arrival for DEPT regards timing as of prime importance. Simultaneously or IMMED FOL inform Letourneau and Pignon of action. Saigon advise Paris in advance to synchronize informing FOMOFF

ACHESON



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

19 October 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY FINLETTER

SUBJECT: Indo-China

Item 1. Sr. NSC Staff Agenda, Thursday, 19 October, 2:30 p.m.

The Southeast Asia Policy Committee has prepared the attached, which furnishes background and a proposed policy. This is now under review by the Joint Secretaries and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Military Aid

We have been giving military aid to the French and Vietnamese in Indo-China. The Melby-Brakine Mission have completed a survey as to the needs. We are preparing to give greater aid, and according to priorities to be furnished by Brigadier General Brink, USA, Chief of MAG, now on the spot in the Tonkin area. As you know, this speed-up has been under discussion with the French authorities this past week. A total of 6 French battalions have either been destroyed or isolated by the Viet Minhs. This leaves 15 Battalions available to the French to oppose about twice that number of Viet Minhs, with some 300 miles of the Chinese border open, with an open line of supply from China and with some 10,000 Vietnam troops in training in China. The French are planning to retreat further but to hold the Delta area. They should be able to hold, with the addition of 4 replacement battalions now enroute and the capability of moving some other troops from Cochin China. The arrival of General Juin and the French Minister for Colonies should ensure an adequate appraisal of the situation.

Political Steps

With our eye on the main objective in Western Europe and our policy against colonialism, and for nationalism (except where our worthwhile allies would be unduly weakened) our ends could best be served by bringing about on the part of the French:

- a. Definite announcement by the French of a decision on their part to phase out their political government in Indochina (action on their part similar to ours in the Philippines)

C O P Y

b.. Building up the prestige and strength of the troops of the Associated States and giving them greater autonomy.

c. Giving greater governmental powers to the States, within the framework of the French Union.

It is, of course, most important that the French do not quit cold and leave a political vacuum behind them.

#### U.S. Military Intervention

The case of the French military in Indo-China is not believed to be hopeless. We are not desirous of being a party to colonialism. We should therefore avoid military intervention, at least for the present. Instead, we should do what we think is to their best interest and ours in the long run; that is, rely mainly on the political steps noted and give increased military aid, aimed primarily at enabling the Associated States to protect themselves against the encroachment of communism.

SPS

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

OCT 25 1950

AMLEGATION

SAIGON

436

In view both State and Defense IMMEDIATE POLIT and MIL advantages sought in NATL army plan must be found THRU IMMEDIATE integration into NATL army commanded by Bao Dai of armed native contingents such as Caoists, Hoa Hao, Catholics, etc. Technical difficulties inherent in this effort well known but must somehow be overcome.

Caoists offer (LEGTEL 638) development of highest importance in DEPTS opinion. We believe every possible effort SHLD be made by LEG, EMB Paris and DEPT to get these men in the fight as part of the new NATL army.

Discussions with Bishops Thuc and Chi and Ngo Dinh Diem during past month centered in large part around DEPTS expressed conviction that MIL forces of Bishop must become part of NATL army at once. DEPT believes that these conversations will bear fruit and will advise developments soonest.

Technical conversations PRELIM to Moch-Petsche conferences FR MIL stated that sixty-six thousand suppletives CLD be incorporated ULTLY into the NATL armies. These they describe as three state forces including regulars and irregulars (see DEPTTEL 307, SEP 27).

LEG advise DEPT and Paris of any steps believe practical to expand Caoists offer and incorporation suppletives NATL armies.

ACHESON



OUTGOING TELEGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OCT 27 1950

AMEMBASSY

PARIS ,  
2250

TOMAP

MAAG TEL France 663, OCT 25, signed Richards, PARA 1, approved.

In order effect compliance with bilateral agreement which covers MDAP assistance, you should hand note to French Government in following sense: QTE My government has noted the request of your government concerning the disposition of certain items of military equipment previously furnished your government pursuant to the terms of the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement between our two governments, dated January 27, 1950. This request affects 24 howitzers (105 mm.) and 6 howitzers (155 mm.) which your government desires to transfer for use in operations now being conducted in Indochina. Having in mind the urgency of these operations, I am pleased to inform you that my government, pursuant to the terms of Article I of the Agreement referred to, gives its consent to the use of these items for the purpose requested by your government. It is understood, of course, that if it should become necessary in the future to devote these howitzers to any other purpose, your government will again request the prior consent of my government, and that the provisions of any agreement to which our two governments may adhere generally covering equipment furnished by the United States for use in Indochina will apply to these howitzers, UNQTE.

ACHESON

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington,  
November 22, 1950  
6 p.m.

USUN,

NEW YORK 516

RE UNTEL 833 NOV 16:

1. DEPT does not favor Peace Observation Commission use in Indochina situation now although we can see that POC can provide evidence of CHI Commie aid to Viet Minh which may be helpful in winning support for our position RE necessity military aid to FR-Vietnamese.

2. However, the Asian UN members WLD undoubtedly insist that, given the present relationship of France toward the Associated States, the UN SHLD examine the whole IC situation rather than merely sending a POC subcommittee whose mission, if able to be accomplished, WLD only look toward cutting down CHI Commie aid to the Viet Minh so that the FR might be able to reduce the warfare to guerrilla activity.

3. We agree that if IC subject is to come into the UN, it is obviously preferable FR do it. However, we see no benefit in FR appeal to UN without FR declaration of intent to grant eventual independence to IC, along lines Letourneau's statements at Saigon press conference (Saigon's 657, OCT 24). Without such declaration by FR, we believe any attempt to secure UN aid, including use of POC, WLD lead to UN insistence on

scrutinizing

scrutinizing entire IC situation and FA role toward both Associated States and Viet Minh, with unforeseeable but hazardous results. Attempt to use FOC is not worth the risks we see inherent in UN consideration of the IC situation at the moment.

Consequently, we do not consider it desirable for you to explore this question further jointly with UK and FA CELS.

ACHESON



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FOR THE PRESS

NOVEMBER 27, 1950  
No. 1187

STATEMENT ON INDOCHINA BY THE  
HONORABLE DEAN RUSK, ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
OF STATE FOR FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS  
November 27, 1950

The United States Government welcomes the definition of the policy of France in Indochina as described in the statement of Monsieur Letourneau, the Minister of Associated States, as confirmed by the Prime Minister, Monsieur Pleven, and by the resolution of the National Assembly which approved that policy. It will be particularly reassuring to nations of the free world to know that the independence of the Associated States of Indochina within the framework of the French Union is now assured and that the military and economic resources of the French Republic and of the Associated States of Indochina will be directed with boldness and renewed resolution to the defense of Indochina against communist colonialism.

To the end that the armies of the Associated States of Indochina and the French Union accomplish their mission and in order that the new states in Indochina attain stability and offer their people a better life, the United States is extending to them military and economic assistance.

The United States Government hopes that other free nations will make every contribution within their power to enable the Associated States and their partners in the French Union to accomplish their mission of freedom.

Extract from Minutes of Truman - Attlee Conversations,  
Washington, December 4-8, 1950  
First Meeting, December 4, 1950

Secretary Acheson:...This moment for negotiation with the communist movement is the worst since 1917. If we do not negotiate and do not have a settlement, what do we do? We may fight as hard as we can in Korea, keeping going as long as possible, punishing the enemy as much as we can. Our negotiating position would be no worse then. If we are pushed out later and cannot hold Korea, we are still on the islands. We must refuse to recognize their gains. We could make as much trouble for the Chinese Communists as possible and hold Formosa, retaining what strength we can. If the Communists are successful in Korea, this may so weaken the French in Indochina that they will pull out. He doubted if any one of the President's advisers would urge him to intervene in that situation.

September 21, 1950

NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

to the

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

on

THE POSITION OF THE UNITED STATES WITH RESPECT TO INDOCHINA

Reference: NSC 64

At the request of the Secretary of Defense, the enclosed memorandum by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the subject is circulated herewith for the information and consideration of the National Security Council and referred to the NSC Staff for use in the preparation of a report for Council consideration.

In transmitting the enclosure, the Secretary of Defense stated that the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff contained therein are based on their review of a proposed draft statement of policy on Indochina which was formulated by the Southeast Asia Aid Policy Committee early in October.

JAMES S. LAY, JR.  
Executive Secretary

cc: The Secretary of the Treasury  
The Director of Defense Mobilization



THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
Washington 25, D. C.

28 November 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE:

SUBJECT: Possible Future Action in Indochina

1. In accordance with the request contained in your memorandum, dated 13 October 1950, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have studied the proposed Statement of U. S. Policy on Indochina for NSC Consideration, which you enclosed, in the light of the message enclosed herewith (Enclosure "A") from Brigadier General F. G. Brink (USA), Chief, Military Assistance Advisory Group, Indochina. You will recall that the Joint Chiefs of Staff withheld final comment on the subject draft policy statement until the Brink report was received.

2. The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that the statement of United States policy proposed by the Southeast Asia Aid Policy Committee conforms generally to their previously expressed views, including those contained in their memorandum to you on Indochina dated 12 October 1950. They are of the opinion, however, that the draft statement of United States policy on Indochina proposed by the Southeast Asia Aid Policy Committee should be recast so as to meet more effectively the immediate and critical situation in that country. Accordingly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have formulated the following statement of short-term and long-term policies which they recommend be substituted for those included in the paper prepared by the Southeast Asia Aid Policy Committee.

3. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recognize that the military problems of Indochina are closely interrelated with the political problems of the area. Accordingly, many of the policies recommended herein lie largely in the political field. The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider, however, that the fundamental causes of the deterioration in the Indochinese security situation lie in the lack of will and determination on the part of the indigenous people of Indochina to join wholeheartedly with the French in resisting communism. The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that, without popular support of the Indochinese people, the French will never achieve a favorable long-range military settlement of the security problem of Indochina.

4. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend the following short-term objectives for Indochina.

## SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES

a. The United States should take action, as a matter of urgency, by all means practicable short of the actual employment of United States military forces, to deny Indochina to communism. ✓

b. As long as the present situation exists, the United States should continue to insure that the primary responsibility for the restoration of peace and security in Indochina rests with the French. ✓

c. The United States should seek to develop its military assistance program for Indochina based on an over-all military plan prepared by the French, concurred in by the Associated States of Indochina, and acceptable to the United States. ✓

(1) Both the plan and the program should be developed and implemented as a matter of urgency. It should be clearly understood, however, that United States acceptance of the plan is limited to the logistical support which the United States may agree to furnish. The aid provided under the program should be furnished to the French in Indochina and to the Associated States. The allocation of United States military assistance as between the French and the national armies of Indochina should be approved by the French and United States authorities in Indochina.

(2) Popular support of the Government by the Indochinese people is essential to a favorable settlement of the security problem of Indochina. Therefore, as a condition to the provision of those further increases in military assistance to Indochina necessary for the implementation of an agreed over-all military plan, the United States Government should obtain assurances from the French Government that:

(a) A program providing for the eventual self-government of Indochina either within or outside of the French Union will be developed, made public, and implementation initiated at once in order to strengthen the national spirit of the Indochinese in opposition to communism.

(b) National armies of the Associated States of Indochina will be organized as a matter of urgency. While it is doubtful that the build-up of these armies can be accomplished in time to contribute significantly to the present military situation, the direct political and psychological benefits to be derived from this course would be great and would thus result in immediate, although indirect, military benefits.



(c) Pending the formation and training of Indo-chinese national armies as effective units, and as an interim emergency measure, France will dispatch sufficient additional armed forces to Indochina to insure that the restoration of peace and internal security in that country will be accomplished in accordance with the timetable of the over-all military plan for Indochina.

(d) France will change its political and military concepts in Indochina to:

i. Eliminate its policy of "colonialism".

ii. Provide proper tutelage to the Associated States.

iii. Insure that a suitable military command structure, unhampered by political interference, is established to conduct effective and appropriate military operations. The effective implementation of these changes will require competent and efficient political and military leaders who will be able to cope with the conditions in that country.

(3) At an appropriate time the United States should institute checks to satisfy itself that the conditions set forth in subparagraph c-(2) above are being fulfilled.

d. The United States should exert all practicable political and diplomatic measures required to obtain the recognition of the Associated States by the other non-communist states of Southeast and South Asia.

e. In the event of overt attack by organized Chinese Communist forces against Indochina, the United States should not permit itself to become engaged in a general war with Communist China but should, in concert with the United Kingdom, support France and the Associated States by all means short of the actual employment of United States military forces. This support should include appropriate expansion of the present military assistance program and endeavors to induce States in the neighborhood of Indochina to commit armed forces to resist the aggression.

f. The United States should immediately reconsider its policy toward Indochina whenever it appears that the French Government may abandon its military position in that country or plans to refer the problem of Indochina to the United Nations. Unless the situation throughout the world generally, and Indochina



specifically, changes materially, the United States should seek to dissuade the French from referring the Indochina question to the United Nations.

g. Inasmuch as the United States-sponsored resolution, "Uniting for Peace", has been adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, and should a situation develop in Indochina in a manner similar to that in Korea in which United Nations forces were required, the United States would then probably be morally obligated to contribute its armed forces designated for service on behalf of the United Nations. It is, therefore, in the interests of the United States to take such action in Indochina as would forestall the need for the General Assembly to invoke the provisions of the resolution, "Uniting for Peace".

5. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend the following long-term objectives for Indochina:

#### LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES

a. United States security interests demand that this government, by all means short of the actual employment of United States military forces, seek to prevent the further spread of communism in Southeast Asia generally and, in particular, in French Indochina.

b. The United States should seek to insure the establishment of such conditions in Indochina that no foreign armed forces will be required for the maintenance of internal security.

c. The United States should continue to press the French to carry out in letter and in spirit the program referred to in paragraph 4-c-(2)-(a) above, providing for the eventual self-government of Indochina either within or outside of the French Union.

d. The United States should continue to favor the entry of the three Associated States of Indochina into the United Nations.

e. The United States should encourage the establishment of an appropriate form of regional security arrangement embracing Indochina and the other countries of Southeast Asia under Articles 51 and 52 of the United Nations Charter.

6. There is enclosed (Enclosure "B") for possible use by the National Security Council Staff the Analysis which was prepared for the Joint Chiefs of Staff in connection with their study of the problem. This Analysis, however, has not received their detailed approval.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

(SIGNED)

OMAR N. BRADLEY,  
Chairman,  
Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Enclosures

C O P Y

ENCLOSURE "A"

STATE DEPT MSG

FROM: US MINISTER SAIGON VIETNAM SGD HEATH

TO: SECRETARY OF STATE

NR: 763

TOMAP  
660718Z

4 November 1950

Sent Dept 763 rptd info Paris 267; Dept pass CofSA for action.  
From Chief MAAG signed Brink.

Reference unnn Deptel 28, Oct 1950.

French are gradually withdrawing from northern frontier and plan to hold general line Moncay-Lackay in Tonkin; in order protect Hanoi-Haiphong area and coal mining area north of Haiphong. Perimeter of these areas is to be organized as main line of resistance. Pacification measures throughout west of Indochina will continue in effect. Northern portion of new defensive area is mountainous with corridors running generally, but not invariably so, toward the Haiphong-Hanoi Delta area. No natural barriers lie between the new line and the Delta area. Haiphong and Hanoi are both surrounded by open Delta paddy country with numerous winding tributaries of the Red River. Railroads lead from Hanoi to Langson and Haiphong. The latter, along with the highway, are the main supply routes to the operational area. The presence of Viet Minh troops prevents land communications between Saigon and Hanoi requiring movements by water and air only. Average time for movements of troops and materiel from Saigon to Haiphong or Hanoi by water and rail varies from 3 to 4 weeks. Airlift between the same places is 36 hours.

Weather during November, December and January in Tonkin area generally excellent with intermittent thunderstorms; in central coastal area poor with average of 20 days per month heavy rain and low ceilings. In southern area generally excellent with intermittent thunderstorms. In the Tonkin Delta area February weather is extremely poor with heavy fog and mist. In central coastal area February weather conditions remain unchanged until June. Weather, therefore, favors general offensive operations in next 3 months by the Viet Minh which has not yet materialized.

Army: The Army combat strength equals the combat strength of the Viet Minh. Army superiority in artillery, engineer services,



weapons, transportation signal equipment and level of supply. It is inferior to Viet Minh in mobility. The Army needs:

(A) Minimum 9 additional battalions in North Tonkin area to make a limited offensive possible. These battalions are not available in Indochina and must come from France or its possessions.

(B) Weapons and equipment to supplement materiel now in use and to replace unserviceable materiel. Adequate spare parts must be furnished.

Navy: Navy has complete Naval superiority and can operate freely along the coast; and inland waterways provided formations of armored craft are used. Navy mission is:

(A) To support ground forces in shore operations by providing shipping convoys for the transportation of personnel and equipment;

(B) To furnish gunfire support and maintain control of off shore areas to prevent Viet Minh smuggling and possible amphibious assault. The Navy has moved additional amphibious craft and commando units to Tonkin

(a) To reinforce the line Haiphong-Moncau,  
(b) To prevent possible flanking by sea and  
(c) To conduct operations with ground force along inland waterways. The flexibility and ability to move concentrations rapidly as needed, made possible by employment of amphibious units, should prove a powerful advantage in Delta fighting. At present the line of defense is still too far inland to allow much Naval participation in active combat.

Air: Viet Minh air strength reported as 40 aircraft which can be successfully engaged by French Air Reserve. Viet Minh anti aircraft artillery is negligible at this time (a few 20mm guns have recently made their first appearance). French have a small and highly coordinated efficient air transport organization for routine and emergency supply and troop movements which has been operating for 3 years from Hanoi Bay. It is capable of ready expansion. Military Air Transport can be supplemented by commercial airlines. There is a specific need for light bombers, fighter bombers, air transport craft and low level reconnaissance planes for photography. The potential of the French Army, Navy and Air supported by their greater resources of all kinds is greater than Viet Minh potential. But as present closer coordination of the action of these forces is needed.

The French state that they now contemplate changing their troop dispositions from a "pacification pattern" of widely scattered small units in North Tonkin intended to gain the good will of the natives and keep down local incidents, to an "operational pattern". This will require a political decision.

The present problem in Indochina under current plans is:

(A) To regroup companies and smaller units now in Tonkin area into combat fighting battalions or regiments with cross-country ability in order to maintain a flexible line of resistance,

(B) To achieve the proper coordinated action of these forces in local area action,

(C) To at least maintain the pacification status quo throughout remainder of Indochina.

A withdrawal to the Hanoi-Haiphong Delta area will permit a stronger coordinated defense in which combined French Army, Navy, and Air Forces can begin dual support and be employed to their utmost capabilities, when their action is properly coordinated. There are excellent fields of fire for Infantry and Artillery. Air will not be forced to operate in restricted mountainous areas and targets will be better defined and more accessible. Numerous waterways in the Delta area will greatly hamper Viet Minh movements because of the necessity to move on foot. Viet Minh routes of advance will be canalized and opportunity for rendezvous made more difficult. French troops will have greater ground, water and air transportation facilities which will afford greater opportunity for quick concentration of larger French troops against the Viet Minh forces. The withdrawal will also permit a regrouping of troops for local offensive action or a general offensive. French supply lines will be shortened and Viet Minh lines lengthened forcing them to establish sub-arsenals and sub-depots south of the frontier where they will be subject to French air attack and ground penetration. The withdrawal, however will permit the Viet Minh to consolidate the area from which these units are withdrawn giving them airstrips, better bases in Indochina and permit political organization and their conscription of the population and may produce an unfavorable chain reaction among the population of Indochina. It is possible that relatively few weapons and possibly aircraft will be given by the Chinese Communists as token gift to the Viet Minh. Chinese Communists may be loath to spare many of these weapons because of their commitments in Manchuria, Changhai-Amoy area, Kowloon, Canton and Tibet.



It must be assumed that, in general, French are fighting in unfriendly territory in all their military efforts in Vietnam. Their military operations may be jeopardized by transfer of loyalty to the Viet Minh throughout Vietnam unless further politically effective concessions are made by France to Vietnam and the formation of Vietnamese Army is initiated.

Weakness of present French military organization appears to be:

(A) An excessively static organization of defensive area with no provisions for mutual support. Detachments from general reserves are sent to the areas as needed and pass to control of area commander,

(B) There are not yet combat organizations greater than battalion size and this does not provide adequate striking forces for strong military effort,

(C) Lack of proper coordination of forces. Few air-ground liaison teams exist.

#### Conclusions:

(1) There has been unduly exaggerated military importance attached to Cao Bang incident; political effect has been serious,

(2) French military forces have been greatly shocked by this incident and better reorganization of their fighting forces can be expected,

(3) Contemplated withdrawal will involve series of difficult operations and further French losses must be expected,

(4) If adequate military aid arrives within next two months and French forces in Tonkin receive an additional 9 battalions and are reorganized and properly trained as the French plan, serious penetrations by Viet Minh of Hanoi-Haiphong Delta area and coal mines north of Haiphong can be prevented,

(5) Moncay-Laokay line is over-extended and can be easily penetrated by Viet Minh forces. Laokay itself offers little military advantage except as bar to Viet Minh advance down Red River but can be by-passed or captured by Viet Minh. Possession of Moncay denies Viet Minh port on the gulf. This port and the port immediately south, if held, can be used as bases from which to launch French counter-offensive.



(6) French at present are in no position initiate counter-offensive to drive Viet Minh to northern border, nor will then be in predictable future in view of increasing Viet Minh strength, unless additional trained troops are brought in from France or its possessions,

(7) Viet Minh activities Cambodia and Laos as well as Vietnam are increasing and no troops can be spared from these areas or operations in Tonkin,

(8) Formation of Vietnamese Army is still under discussion, and not likely to become consolidated force within a year, and will not have any appreciable military value before 1952 except possibly as police force in pacification areas. Conclusions are based on assumption that Chinese Communists will not openly participate in Viet Minh operations and immediate military aid requested in Legtel 566, October 16 will arrive by 1 January 1951.

Extremely fast-moving political situation in Indochina presents many complications for French Military Command. Current plans of French military here are at present still dependent on controversial negotiations and political decisions which must be made quickly, and the military is being delayed in implementing their current plans. Three main questions at this time are:

(A) Decision which must yet be made as to changing the mission of military in Tonkin entirely from pacification to direct operational,

(B) Manner and speed with which Vietnamese Army will be activated,

(C) Speed with which military air will be delivered. Current French plans will be successful only if these questions are resolved successfully without delay.

Participated in conference with Juin and have discussed situation and plans with Carpentier here, Allestrandri in Hanoi, and chiefs of major forces. General Valluy, Juin assistant, has remained here with him and I have had similar discussion with him.

He has requested another conversation Monday 6th. General Harding visited here one day, gave him situation briefly but no prolonged discussion since he returned Singapore after Carpentier had denied him visit to northern Tonkin. Carpentier has given me free access to himself, his staff and commanders and authority to visit Tonkin, which I have done, including Hanoi and Haiphong. Will keep you informed.

Note: DEPTTEL 28 is CM IN 6446 (30 Oct) G2.  
LEGTTEL 566 is CM IN 6223 (30 Oct) G2.

ACTION: G2

INFO: G3, JCS G4, MUN

CM IN 8337 (6 November 1950)

ENCLOSURE "B"

ANALYSIS

1. On 5 April 1950 the Joint Chiefs of Staff forwarded a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense in which it was stated, among other things, that:

"The mainland states of Southeast Asia also are at present of critical strategic importance to the United States because:

"a. They are the major sources of certain strategic materials required for the completion of United States stockpile projects;

"b. The area is a crossroad of communications;

"c. Southeast Asia is a vital segment in the line of containment of communism stretching from Japan southward and around to the Indian Peninsula. The security of the three major non-Communist base areas in this quarter of the world--Japan, India, and Australia--depends in a large measure on the denial of Southeast Asia to the Communists. If Southeast Asia is lost, these three base areas will tend to be isolated from one another;

"d. The fall of Indochina would undoubtedly lead to the fall of the other mainland states of Southeast Asia. Their fall would:

"(1) Require changing the Philippines and Indonesia from supporting positions in the Asian off-shore island chain to front-line bases for the defense of the Western Hemisphere. It would also call for a review of the strategic deployment of United States forces in the Far East; and

"(2) Bring about almost immediately a dangerous condition with respect to the internal security of the Philippines, Malaya, and Indonesia, and would contribute to their probable eventual fall to the communists;

"e. The fall of Southeast Asia would result in the virtually complete denial to the United States of the Pacific littoral of Asia. Southeast Asian mainland areas are important in the conduct of operations to contain communist expansion;



"f. Communist control of this area would alleviate considerably the food problem of China and would make available to the USSR important strategic materials. In this connection, Soviet control of all the major components of Asia's war potential might become a decisive factor affecting the balance of power between the United States and the USSR. A Soviet position of dominance over Asia, Western Europe, or both, would constitute a major threat to United States security; and

"g. A Soviet position of dominance over the Far East would also threaten the United States position in Japan since that country could thereby be denied its Asian markets, sources of food and other raw materials. The feasibility of retention by the United States of its Asian offshore island bases could thus be jeopardized."

2. The series of defeats suffered recently by the French in northern Tonkin serves to focus attention upon the urgency of the current military situation in Indochina and points up the fact that the Viet Minhs now constitute a direct threat to the French military position in Indochina. The current military situation is serious since the effect produced by the impact of French defeats can gain momentum which may have dire repercussions upon an already deteriorating political situation in Southeast Asia. By taking over border posts, the Viet Minhs now can maintain uninterrupted liaison with Communist China. At this time when a majority of the Indochinese are favorably disposed toward the Viet Minhs, as opposed to the French and Bao Dai, any increases in popular support of the Viet Minhs could have alarming consequences. The deteriorating military and political situation in French Indochina demands that the United States policy toward Indochina be recast in order to assist in restoring the balance in favor of the French and Vietnamese.

3. There is an important difference between the strategic importance of Indochina to the United States in a major war and its strategic importance in a cold war. Current war plans do not contemplate the deployment of United States military forces for the retention of Indochina in the event of global war. However, if the communists gained control of Indochina at any time other than in the course of a global war, this would bring about almost immediately a dangerous condition with respect to the internal security of all of the other countries of Southeast Asia, as well as the Philippines and Indonesia, and would contribute to their probable eventual fall to communism. Even India and Pakistan would be threatened. Thus the loss of Indochina to communism would have direct implications on United States security. In addition, this loss would have widespread political and psychological repercussions upon other non-communist states throughout the world. In view of United States security interests in the country, and the critical situation now



existing there, the United States should take action, as a matter of urgency, by all means practicable short of the actual employment of United States military forces, to deny Indochina to communism.

4. It appears that the French are only now beginning to recognize the military and political measures which must be undertaken in order to secure the French position in Indochina. The French attitudes and actions, however, must not be permitted to obscure the United States interest in the solution of the Indochina problem.

5. It has been suggested that if the French remain in Indochina that country might be lost to communism, regardless of the military aid programs which the United States may implement. This thinking presupposes either such a low order of military power in France and her colonies as to make it utterly impossible for that nation to cope with the Viet Minhs or such intransigence and unrealism in the French Government as to preclude it from facing facts. Current intelligence estimates do not accord France and her colonies this low order of military power. While, up to this time, the attitude of the French Government toward French Indochina has been one of temporization and consequently one of weakness, it is believed that the seriousness of the situation, particularly the political situation, may now have been recognized by the French Government.

6. The United States should urge France to meet its responsibility by taking the military, political, and economic action, including the injection of new leadership, necessary to save Indochina from communism. If France decides to withdraw from French Indochina, there would, in all probability, be only a slight chance that the United Nations could retrieve the situation in that country in favor of the Western Powers.

7. The following are the three major courses with military implications which might be adopted to achieve peace and security in Indochina against either the internal threat of the Viet Minhs or the external threat of Communist China:

a. Through armed action by France and the Associated States of Indochina together with the forces of the United States and/or other Western Powers;

b. By armed action by France and the Associated States of Indochina supported by United States military aid and assistance; and

c. By United Nations action either under the United States-sponsored resolution, "Uniting for Peace," or by French withdrawal from Indochina and action by the United Nations similar to that followed in the case of the Netherlands and Indonesia.

8. In the event of overt attack by organized Chinese Communist forces against Indochina the United States should not permit itself



to become engaged in a general war with Communist China and should not, therefore, commit United States forces to that area; neither should the United States commit its military forces to Indochina in order to assist the French in restoring internal security. The considerations underlying these views are:

a. Involvement of United States forces against Viet Minh forces would be likely to lead to war with Communist China.

b. A general war with Communist China would, in all probability, have to be taken as a prelude to global war;

c. Our major enemy in a global war would be the USSR;

d. Our primary theater in the event of a global war would, in all probability, be Western Europe; and

e. The forces of the Western Powers are insufficient to wage war on the mainland of Asia and at the same time accomplish the predetermined Allied objectives in Europe.

9. While minor commitments of United States military forces might be sufficient to defeat the Viet Minhs in Indochina it is more probable that such commitments would lead to a major involvement of the United States in that area similar to that in Korea or even to global war. Accordingly, there would be great potential danger to the security interests of the United States in the commitment of any "token" or "minor" United States forces in Indochina.

10. Indochina is an area in which the French bear primary responsibility, and the problem of restoration of peace and security to that country should continue to rest with the French. Overt intervention by any foreign power on the side of France would immediately enhance the danger of a global war and would lay France and the other foreign powers open to a charge of imperialism.

11. Thus far the French apparently have failed in Indochina to provide adequate political and military leadership, to develop sound military plans, and to utilize properly their military resources. The urgency of the situation in Indochina, however, is so great that the present United States military aid program for that country should continue, and steps should be taken to expedite shipment of the materiel earmarked for that area. However, it would be desirable for the United States military assistance program to be based on an over-all military plan for Indochina developed by the French, concurred in by the Associated States of Indochina, and acceptable to the United States. This plan should be developed as a result of staff talks conducted in Saigon among representatives of the three countries. It should be made clear from the outset



that United States acceptance of the plan is limited to the logistical support which the United States may agree to furnish. If time permits, military representatives of the United Kingdom also might be invited to attend. There should be a timetable to the plan. Estimates of materiel requirements which the United States would be expected to provide on an accelerated basis should also be submitted.

12. Popular support of the Government by the Indochinese people is essential to a favorable settlement of the security problem of Indochina. Therefore, as a condition to the provision of those further increases in military assistance to Indochina necessary for the implementation of an agreed over-all military plan, the United States Government should obtain assurances from the French Government that:

a. A program providing for the eventual self-government of Indochina either within or outside of the French Union will be developed, made public, and implementation initiated at once in order to strengthen the national spirit of the Indochinese in opposition to communism;

b. National armies of the Associated States of Indochina will be organized as a matter of urgency. While it is doubtful that the build-up of these armies can be accomplished in time to contribute significantly to the present military situation, the direct political and psychological benefits to be derived from this course would be great and would thus result in immediate, although indirect, military benefits;

c. Pending the formation and training of Indochinese national armies as effective units, and as an interim emergency measure, France will dispatch sufficient additional armed forces to Indochina to insure that the restoration of peace and internal security in that country will be accomplished in accordance with the timetable of the over-all military plan for Indochina; and

d. France will change its political and military concepts in Indochina to:

(1) Eliminate its policy of "colonialism";

(2) Provide proper tutelage to the Associated States;  
and

(3) Insure that a suitable military command structure, unhampered by political interference, is established to conduct effective and appropriate military operations.

The effective implementation of these changes will require competent and efficient political and military leaders who will be able to cope with the conditions in that country.



13. At an appropriate time the United States should institute checks to satisfy itself that the conditions set forth in paragraph 12 above are being fulfilled. The United States should also continue to maintain the situation in Indochina under continuing review and should be prepared to revise its policy when conditions warrant.

14. In the event of overt attack by organized Chinese Communist forces against Indochina, the United States should not permit itself to become engaged in a general war with Communist China but should, in concert with the United Kingdom, support France and the Associated States by all means short of the actual employment of United States military forces. This support should include appropriate expansion of the present military assistance program.

15. Any appeal by France to the United Nations would, in all probability, be embarrassing for the Western Powers since the rule of France over its colony is not likely to be well received by the General Assembly of the United Nations. The USSR has recognized the Viet Minh Government and, therefore, a veto by the USSR of any assistance for France would have to be expected in the Security Council. In view of the foregoing, unless the situation throughout the world generally and in Indochina specifically changes materially the United States should seek to dissuade the French from referring the Indochina question to the United Nations.

16. Inasmuch as the United States-sponsored resolution, "Uniting for Peace," has been adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, and should a situation develop in Indochina in a manner similar to that in Korea in which United Nations forces were required, the United States would then probably be morally obligated to contribute its armed forces designated for service on behalf of the United Nations. It is, therefore, in the interests of the United States to take such action in Indochina as would forestall the need for the General Assembly to invoke the provisions of the resolution, "Uniting for Peace." Should France, however, refer the question of Indochina to the United Nations, the United States should give consideration to adopting a position favoring early French withdrawal from Indochina and action by the United Nations similar to that followed in the case of the Netherlands and Indonesia.

17. It appears that, in view of the unrest in Southeast Asia generally and in Indochina specifically, any military victory in Indochina over the communists would be temporary in nature. The long-term solution to the unrest in Indochina lies in sweeping political and economic concessions by France and in the ultimate self-government of the three Associated States within the French Union or their complete independence of France. From the viewpoint of the United States, pressure on France to provide the much needed leadership to initiate these reforms and to grant self-government will prove less expensive in United States lives and national treasure than military commitments by us.

PAGES  
417-418  
MISSING  
IN  
ORIGINAL  
DOCUMENT



OUTGOING TELEGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington,  
January 30, 1951  
8 p.m.

SENT TO: Amlegation Saigon - 974

[US position at Truman-Pleven Talks.]

Although we are not prepared to consider question of tripartite SEA command as suggested by FR we are prepared under certain specific and limiting conditions to adhere to our agreement to take part in high level tripartite MIL conversations as agreed at the SEP FOMIN CONF. We are prepared to appoint man from Admiral Radford's staff to represent us.

We assured FR that our aid program to IC will be carried out as presently planned, barring unforeseen developments. We are prepared to give the FR more detailed info on the way our aid program works and specific consideration being given to IC in overall picture. We have told the FR we are not prepared to commit ground forces but WLD, dependent on circumstances applicable at time, supply logistic support in the event of a forced evacuation.

At the 25 billion franc deficit in sum required for NATL armies (FR state only 33 billion of 58 required can be covered by FR and Viet budgets combined). The FR made us a formal request for additional aid of 70 million dollars. We have given them no assurance in that regard and are now

and are now engaged in detailed studies at specialists level concerning matters. For your INFO it is very unlikely that this GOVT will engage itself to finance the budgetary deficit of another GOVT but we hope to devise some other method to assure that necessary funds for the development of the NATL armies be forthcoming.

Although we did not accede to the FR request for another aircraft carrier, GEN Marshall informed Fleven that the present restrictions on the use of the Langley VLD be removed, thus apparently making Langley available to FR for use in Far Eastern waters if they so choose. We assured the FR that the effect of the loss of Tonkin or of all of IC to rest of SEA is constantly under study by this GOVT.

. . . . .  
ACHELSON

COPY

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Washington

March 15, 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. JAMES S. LAY, JR.,  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: First Progress Report on NSC 64, "The Position of the United States with Respect to Indochina".

NSC 64, "The Position of the United States with Respect to Indochina", was approved as government policy on March 27, 1950. It is requested that this first progress report as of March 1, 1951, be circulated to members of the Council for their information.

I - POLICY IMPLEMENTATION.

Military Aid

The Military Aid Program to Indochina enjoys the highest priority immediately after the military effort in Korea. The first deliveries began in June 1950 and by the end of January 1951 military assistance totalling approximately \$50 million had been delivered to Indochina. Approximately \$113 million in further military aid already has been programmed and is at varying stages in the supply process. An additional \$52 million of military aid is now being programmed out of remaining FY '51 funds and something approaching \$170 million for this purpose has been included in the tentative budget estimates upon which the President's FY '52 budget was based. This aid program follows in general the request submitted to the United States Government by the French Government in March 1950. During August 1950 Indochina was visited by a Joint Survey Mission under the chairmanship of Mr. John Melby of the Department of State, of which Major General Erskine, USMC was the senior military member. The mission recommended that the United States continue its efforts to supply the assistance requested by the French in March 1950, with certain additions. Equipment already delivered to Indochina, or enroute, includes various aircraft, naval vessels, equipment for twelve infantry battalions (less small arms), and miscellaneous equipment and ammunition, supplied both from the United States and the United States Far East Command. In addition to the military assistance initially requested, materiel has now been requested for the equipping of national armies in each of the three States. The cost and availability of this materiel is now unknown.



U. S. military aid already received in Indochina has increased the capability of the State forces and French Union forces considerably. If aid already furnished had not been supplied, those forces would not have been able to maintain their present positions. It is realized, however, that American assistance is supplemental to, and does not replace the primary responsibility of the three States and of the French Republic.

### Indochina Foreign Relations

The United States has continued to extend political support to the States of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. Agrément has been granted for the first Cambodian Minister to the United States. The United Kingdom has sent a diplomatic representative to the three States. Vietnam is planning to open a mission in Bangkok and has sent a minister to London. Cambodia has named a minister to Bangkok.

The three State Governments have been recognized by some 30 powers. They have been elected to membership in several UN organs such as FAO, WHO and ILO. The USSR and its satellites, including Communist China, have recognized the Ho Chi Minh movement as constituting the legal government of Vietnam, but not of Cambodia and Laos.

Although the Government of Thailand and the Republic of Korea have extended diplomatic recognition to the three Governments, the majority of the Asian states continue to be apathetic toward recognition. This attitude is based on an anti-colonial rather than a pro-Communist sentiment. The result, nevertheless, has been indirectly to encourage the Communist-directed Viet Minh forces through failure to support the legal governments. The French Government has done little in the past to publicize the progressive transfer of authority to the three States, which was completed by the end of 1950. In external affairs, the French Government has the right to be consulted on the selection of diplomatic posts, designation of Chiefs of Missions and negotiation of international agreements. The continuing presence in Indochina, however, of a French High Commissioner and some 70,000 French troops, as well as the fact that France continues to finance, to a large degree, the budget deficits of the three State Governments, may constitute in Asian eyes evidence of continued French control. A withdrawal of French financial and military support would result in rapid successes by the Viet Minh forces and the formation of Communist governments within the three States. Asian states are only slowly becoming aroused to this threat to their own independence as a result both of United States efforts to identify it and of Chinese activities in Korea and Tibet, in addition to Indochina.



## Indochina Internal Situation

Internal administration was transferred by the French to the State Governments on December 30, 1949, except for certain powers reserved to the French High Commissioner and certain interstate matters to be settled by an interstate conference. This conference was concluded in November 1950 when it was agreed that all internal administration would be turned over by the French to the State Governments by December 31, 1950. However, the piastre would continue to be pegged to the franc (at a rate highly beneficial to the piastre); the French have military base rights similar to those of the United States in the Philippines as provided in the United States-Philippine Treaty; and French functionaries would continue to carry out certain educational, war damage, and French military security functions. Other French functionaries would be employed by the Associated States only as desired by the latter.

The three State Governments are now limited in their assumption of powers only by the availability of qualified indigenous officials their dependence on continued French financial support and their lack of popular support. The planned formation during 1951 of national armies is expected to contribute toward the actual attainment of sovereignty in each State. This should have a beneficial political effect in winning additional popular support for the governments.

The most severe threat to the continued growth and even to the continued existence of the State governments is the increased capability of the Viet Minh forces, resulting from the extension of military and materiel aid from Communist China. There is also some evidence of Soviet support. Such aid from Communist China began in April 1950, and has increased steadily. Up to now, light artillery, mortars and automatic weapons have been shipped to Indochina for the Viet Minh. Training centers in South China have trained and equipped some 50 Viet Minh battalions which have returned to Vietnam. The capacity of the training centers has been estimated at 10 to 30 thousand men rotated about every three months with some 50,000 having already completed their training. It has been reported that there are 15 to 20 Chinese technicians with each China-trained Viet Minh battalion, usually directing the artillery. The capability of these troops is rated as equal to that of French Union Forces. Chinese Communist troops in South China, within easy striking distance of the border, are estimated at two to three hundred thousand. Airfields at the border posts evacuated by the French are available to the Viet Minh, and air training is reportedly being conducted in China. However, no Viet Minh air power has yet been used, and in this respect the French Union Forces hold a present advantage due almost entirely to United States Military Aid. French Naval power is also superior

but is incapable of interdicting all small craft smuggling arms.

The Viet Minh forces have the present ability to continue to occupy the major area of Tonkin (North Vietnam), and to threaten the two large cities of Hanoi and Haiphong. Scattered elements throughout central and southern Indochina, continue to have a harassing ability, preventing peaceful conditions and the resumption of orderly life and trade. With continued assistance at the present level from Communist China, the Viet Minh forces will remain a serious threat to the ability of the States and the French Union Forces to defend and hold the major portion of Indochina. If massive Chinese Communist armies actually invade Indochina, such an attack could not be successfully resisted by the presently available forces and most of Indochina could be overrun within a matter of months.

The ability of the State and the French Union Forces to maintain their present positions in Indochina, therefore depends only upon the absence of an actual Chinese Communist invasion in force. Their ability to improve their present position, that is, defense against the Viet Minh as presently augmented by Chinese Communist aid, will depend upon continuing materiel and financial aid from France and the United States, and the skill with which such resources are utilized.

## II - POLICY EVALUATION

The policy adopted in NSC 64 and the measures taken to implement it have made a valuable contribution toward the stability of Indochina and of Southeast Asia. American military aid furnished the States' forces and the Army of the French Union may have been the decisive factor in the preservation of the area against Communist aggression.

Future policy with regard to Indochina will be the subject of new studies now under preparation for the NSC.

/s/ JAMES E. WEBB



May 17, 1951

NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

to the

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

on

UNITED STATES OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND COURSES OF ACTION IN ASIA

References: A. NSC 48 Series  
B. NSC Action No. 471  
C. Memos for NSC from Executive Secretary, same subject, dated May 14 and 15, 1951  
D. NSC 13 Series  
E. NSC 22 Series  
F. NSC 34 Series  
G. NSC 37 Series  
H. NSC 60/1  
I. NSC 81 Series  
J. NSC 101 Series

The President has this date approved the statement of policy contained in NSC 48/4 as amended and adopted at the 91st meeting of the National Security Council (NSC Action No. 471), and directs its implementation by all appropriate executive departments and agencies of the United States Government under the coordination of the Secretaries of State and Defense.

The approved statement of policy is accordingly circulated herewith for information and appropriate action. Also enclosed for information is the NSC staff study on the subject contained in the Annex to NSC 48/3, appropriately revised.

The President has also approved the Council's recommendation in NSC Action No. 471-c. Accordingly, the statements of policy contained in NSC 48/2, the NSC 13 Series, the NSC 22 Series, the NSC 34 Series, the NSC 37 Series and the NSC 81 Series are superseded herewith; further action on the NSC 101 Series is canceled, but NSC 60/1 is not superseded.

JAMES S. LAY, Jr.  
Executive Secretary

cc: The Secretary of the Treasury  
The Director of Defense Mobilization

## STATEMENT OF POLICY

on

### ASIA

#### General Considerations

1. United States objectives, policies, and courses of action in Asia should be designed to contribute toward the global objective of strengthening the free world vis-a-vis the Soviet orbit, and should be determined with due regard to the relation of United States capabilities and commitments throughout the world. However, in view of the communist resort to armed force in Asia, United States action in that area must be based on the recognition that the most immediate overt threats to United States security are currently presented in that area.

2. Current Soviet tactics appear to concentrate on bringing the mainland of Eastern Asia and eventually Japan and the other principal off-shore islands in the Western Pacific under Soviet control, primarily through Soviet exploitation of the resources of communist China. The attainment of this objective on the mainland of Eastern Asia would substantially enhance the global position of the USSR at the expense of the United States, by securing the eastern flank of the USSR and permitting the USSR to concentrate its offensive power in other areas, particularly in Europe. Soviet control of the off-shore islands in the Western Pacific, including Japan, would present an unacceptable

threat to the security of the United States.

3. The United States should, without sacrificing vital security interests, seek to avoid precipitating a general war with the USSR, particularly during the current build-up of the military and supporting strength of the United States and its allies to a level of military readiness adequate to support United States foreign policy, to deter further Soviet aggression, and to form the basis for fighting a global war should this prove unavoidable. This should not preclude undertaking calculated risks in specific areas in the over-all interest of the defense of the United States.

4. The United States should seek the firm establishment and effective application of the principle of collective security and should, except in those instances when on balance the need for unilateral action outweighs other considerations, act in and through the United Nations, preserve solidarity with its principal allies, and maintain the continued cooperation of other friendly nations.

#### Long-Range Objectives

5. The long-range national security objectives of the United States with respect to Asia are:

a. Development by the nations and peoples of Asia, through self-help and mutual aid, of stable and self-sustaining non-communist governments, friendly to the United States, acting in accordance with the purposes and

*Religious - 100*



principles of the United Nations Charter, and having the will and ability to maintain internal security, withstand communist influence, and prevent aggression.

b. Elimination of the preponderant power and influence of the USSR in Asia or its reduction to such a degree that the Soviet Union will not be capable of threatening from that area the security of the United States or its friends, or the peace, national independence and stability of the Asiatic nations. Pac

c. Development of power relationships in Asia which will make it impossible for any nation or alliance to threaten the security of the United States from that area. Pac

d. Insofar as practicable, securing for the United States and the rest of the free world, and denying to the communist world, the availability through mutually advantageous arrangements, of the material resources of the Asian area. Pac

#### Current Objectives

6. In view of the threat to United States security interests resulting from communist aggression in Asia, it should be the policy of the United States to:

a. Detach China as an effective ally of the USSR and support the development of an independent China which has renounced aggression. Pac

b. Maintain the security of the off-shore defense line: Japan-Ryukyus-Philippines-Australia and New Zealand. Deny Formosa to any Chinese regime aligned with or dominated by the USSR and expedite the strengthening of the defensive capabilities of Formosa. Attempt by all practicable means to forestall communist aggression in South and Southeast Asia.

c. Assist Japan to become a self-reliant nation friendly to the United States, capable of maintaining internal security and defense against external aggression and contributing to the security and stability of the Far East.

d. Promote the development of effective security and economic relationships among the free nations of Asia and the Pacific area, including the United States, on the basis of self-help and mutual aid, with appropriate United States assistance.

e. Continue as an ultimate objective to seek by political, as distinguished from military means, a solution of the Korean problem which would provide for a united, independent and democratic Korea. Seek, through appropriate UN machinery, as a current objective a settlement acceptable to the United States, of the Korean conflict which would, as a minimum

- (1) terminate hostilities under appropriate armistice arrangements;
- (2) establish the authority of the Republic of Korea over all Korea south of a northern boundary so located as to

facilitate, to the maximum extent possible, both administration and military defense, and in no case south of the 38th Parallel (3) provide for the withdrawal by appropriate stages of non-Korean armed forces from Korea; (4) permit the building of sufficient ROK military power to deter or repel a renewed North Korean aggression. Until the above current objective is attainable, continue to oppose and penalize the aggressor.

f. Consistent with e above and the protection of the security of U. S. and UN forces, seek to avoid the extension of hostilities in Korea into a general war with the Soviet Union, and seek to avoid the extension beyond Korea of hostilities with Communist China, particularly without the support of our major allies. *modified*

g. Assist the countries of South and Southeast Asia to develop the will and ability to resist communism from within and without, and to contribute to the strengthening of the free world. *Public - ~~Security~~*

h. In accordance with 5-d above, take such current and continuing action as may be practicable to maximize the availability, through mutually advantageous arrangements, of the material resources of the Asian area to the United States and the free world generally, and thereby correspondingly deny these resources to the communist world. *13 N-10*

7. In accordance with the above, the United States should pursue in the respective areas of Asia the courses of action set



forth in the following paragraphs.

8. While continuing to recognize the National Government as the legal government of China, the United States, with respect to Communist China, should now:

a. Continue strong efforts to deflate Chinese Communist political and military strength and prestige by inflicting heavy losses on Chinese forces in Korea through the present UN operation.

b. Expand and intensify, by all available means, efforts to develop non-communist leadership and to influence the leaders and people in China to oppose the present Peiping regime and to seek its reorientation or replacement.

c. Foster and support anti-communist Chinese elements both outside and within China with a view to developing and expanding resistance in China to the Peiping regime's control, particularly in South China.

d. Stimulate differences between the Peiping and Moscow regimes and create cleavages within the Peiping regime itself by every practicable means.

e. Continue United States economic restrictions against China, continue to oppose seating Communist China in the UN, intensify efforts to persuade other nations to adopt similar positions, and foster the imposition of United Nations political and economic sanctions as related to developments in Korea.

f. In order to be prepared for Chinese aggression outside Korea, to protect the security of UN and U. S. forces, and to provide for appropriate military action in the event that UN forces are forced to evacuate Korea, expedite the development of plans for the following courses of action, if such action should later be deemed necessary:

(1) Imposing a blockade of the China coast by naval and air forces.

(2) Military action against selected targets held by Communist China outside of Korea.

(3) Participation defensively or offensively of the Chinese Nationalist forces, and the necessary operational assistance to make them effective.

g. Continue as a matter of urgency to influence our allies to stand with us and fully support the taking of such actions as those indicated in f above if military operations outside Korea should be required.

9. With respect to the situation in Korea, the United States should:

a. Seek an acceptable political settlement in Korea that does not jeopardize the United States position with respect to the USSR, to Formosa, or to seating Communist China in the UN.

b. In the absence of such a settlement, and recognizing that currently there is no other acceptable alternative, continue the current military course of action in Korea, without commitment to unify Korea by military force, but designed to:

(1) Inflict maximum losses on the enemy.

(2) Prevent the overrunning of South Korea by military aggression.

(3) Limit communist capabilities for aggression elsewhere in Asia.

c. Continue its efforts to influence our allies to increase their support of and contribution to the UN operations in Korea.

d. Develop dependable South Korean military units as rapidly as possible and in sufficient strength eventually to assume the major part of the burden of the UN forces there.

e. If the USSR commits units of Soviet "volunteers" sufficient to jeopardize the safety of UN forces in Korea, give immediate consideration to withdrawing UN forces from Korea and placing the United States in the best possible position of readiness for general war.

f. If the USSR precipitates a general war, withdraw UN forces from Korea as rapidly as possible and deploy United States forces for service elsewhere.

g. Working in and through the organs of the United Nations where feasible, continue to strengthen the government and democratic institutions of the Republic of Korea, and continue to contribute to the United Nations efforts for economic recovery and rehabilitation in the Republic of Korea and in areas of Korea liberated from communist control.



10. With respect to Japan the United States should:

a. Proceed urgently to conclude a peace settlement with Japan on the basis of the position already determined by the President, through urgent efforts to obtain agreement to this position by as many nations which participated in the war with Japan as possible.

b. Proceed urgently with the negotiation of bilateral security arrangements with Japan on the basis of the position determined by the President to be concluded simultaneously with a peace treaty.

c. Assist Japan to become economically self-supporting and to produce goods and services important to the United States and to the economic stability of the non-communist area of Asia.

d. Pending the conclusion of a peace settlement continue to:

(1) Take such steps as will facilitate transition from occupation status to restoration of sovereignty.

(2) Assist Japan in organizing, training, and equipping the National Police Reserve and the Maritime Safety Patrol in order to facilitate the formation of an effective military establishment.

e. Following the conclusion of a peace settlement:

(1) Assist Japan in the development of appropriate military forces. 1251.

(2) Assist Japan in the production of low-cost military materiel in volume for use in Japan and in other non-communist countries of Asia.

(3) Take all practicable steps to achieve Japanese membership in the United Nations and participation in a regional security arrangement.

(4) Establish appropriate psychological programs designed to further orient the Japanese toward the free world and away from communism.

11. With respect to Formosa the United States should:

a. Continue, as long as required by United States security interests, the mission presently assigned to the 7th Fleet.

b. Encourage political changes in the Nationalist regime which would increase its prestige and influence in China proper.

c. Provide military and economic assistance to increase the potential of the Chinese forces on Formosa for the defense of Formosa and for such other uses as may be determined [as a result of the planning pursuant to 8-f above.]

12. The United States should continue the policy with respect to the Philippines set forth in NSC 84/2.

13. The United States should continue the policy with respect to South Asia set forth in NSC 98/1.

14. With respect to Southeast Asia, the United States should:

a. Continue its present support programs to strengthen the will and ability to resist communist encroachment, to render communist military operations as costly as possible, and thus to gain time for the United States and its allies to build up the defense of the off-shore chain.

b. Continue programs of information and educational exchange in the countries of Southeast Asia.

c. Encourage the countries of Southeast Asia to restore and expand their commerce with each other and the rest of the free world, stimulate the flow of the raw material resources of the area to the free world, and assist in establishing small arms production in appropriate locations in Southeast Asia under suitable controls.

d. In Indochina:

✓ (1) Continue to increase the military effectiveness of French units and the size and equipment of indigenous units by providing timely and suitable military assistance without relieving the French authorities of their basic military responsibilities or committing United States armed forces.

(2) Continue to encourage internal autonomy and progressive social and economic reforms.

(3) Continue to promote international support for the three Associated States.

e. In Indonesia, the United States should seek to strengthen the non-communist political orientation of the government, promote the economic development of Indonesia, and influence Indonesia toward greater participation in measures which support the security of the area and Indonesian solidarity with the free world.

15. With respect to regional security arrangements, the United States should:

a. Conclude the post-treaty security arrangements with Japan as provided for in 10-b above.



b. Maintain the security relationships with the Philippines as provided for in 12 above.

c. Conclude a security arrangement with Australia and New Zealand.

d. Consider the desirability of security arrangements with other countries of Asia, either on a bilateral or multilateral basis.

e. Encourage and support closer economic and political cooperation with and among the countries of Asia in keeping with the objective stated in 6-d above.

## NSC STAFF STUDY

on

### UNITED STATES OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND COURSES OF ACTION IN ASIA\*

#### PROBLEM

1. To determine United States national objectives, policies, and courses of action with respect to Asia.

#### UNITED STATES LONG-RANGE NATIONAL OBJECTIVES IN ASIA

2. The long-range national security objectives of the United States with respect to Asia are:

a. Development by the nations and peoples of Asia, through self-help and mutual aid, of stable and self-sustaining non-communist governments, oriented toward the United States, acting in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and having the will and ability to maintain internal security and prevent communist aggression.

b. Elimination of the preponderant power and influence of the USSR in Asia or its reduction to such a degree that the Soviet Union will not be capable of threatening from that area the security of the United States or its friends, or the peace, national independence and stability of the Asiatic nations.

c. Development of power relationships in Asia which will make it impossible for any nation or alliance to threaten the security of the United States from that area.

d. In so far as practicable, securing for the United States and the rest of the free world, and denying to the communist world, the availability through mutually advantageous arrangements, of the material resources of the Asian area.

\*For the purposes of this report, "Asia" is defined as that part of the continent of Asia south of the USSR and east of Iran together with the major off-shore islands -- Japan, Ryukyus, Formosa, the Philippines, Indonesia, Ceylon, Australia and New Zealand.

## ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION

3. United States objectives, policies, and courses of action in Asia should be designed to contribute toward the global objectives of strengthening the free world vis-a-vis the Soviet orbit, and should be determined with due regard to the relation of United States capabilities and commitments throughout the world. However, in view of the communist resort to armed force in Asia, United States action in that area must be based on the recognition that the most immediate threats to United States security are currently presented in that area.

4. Current Soviet tactics appear to concentrate on bringing the mainland of Eastern Asia and eventually Japan and the other principal off-shore islands in the Western Pacific under Soviet control, primarily through Soviet exploitation of the resources of communist China. The attainment of this objective on the mainland of Eastern Asia would substantially enhance the global position of the USSR at the expense of the United States, by securing the eastern flank of the USSR and permitting the USSR to concentrate its offensive power in other areas, particularly in Europe. Soviet control of the off-shore islands in the Western Pacific, including Japan, would present an unacceptable threat to the security of the United States.

5. Asia is of strategic importance to the United States.

a. The strategic significance of Asia arises from its resources, geography, and the political and military force which it could generate. The population of the area is about 1,250,000,000. The demonstrated military capacity of the North Korean and Chinese armies requires a re-evaluation of the threat to the free world which the masses of Asia would constitute if they fell under Soviet Communist domination.

b. The resources of Asia contribute greatly to United States security by helping to meet its need for critical materials and they would be of great assistance in time of war if they remained available. At least until stockpiling levels are met, this phase of the area's importance to the United States will continue. Further, the development of events which might lead to the exhaustion of such stockpiles would magnify the importance of this source of supply. The area produces practically all the world's natural rubber, nearly 5% of the oil, 60% of the tin, the major part of various important tropical products, and strategic materials such as manganese, jute, and atomic materials. Japan's potential in heavy industry is roughly equal to 50% of the Soviet Union's present production. Therefore, it is



important to U. S. security interests that U. S. military and economic assistance programs be developed in such a manner as to maximize the availabilities of the material resources of the Asian area to the United States and the free world.

c. Control by an enemy of the Asiatic mainland would deny to us the use of the most direct sea and air routes between Australia and the Middle East and between the United States and India. Such control would produce disastrous moral and psychological effects in border areas such as the Middle East and a critical effect in Western Europe.

6. The fact of Soviet power and communist aggression in Asia establishes the context within which the policies of the United States must operate.

a. The problem of China is the central problem which faces the United States in Asia. A solution to this problem, through a change in the regime in control of mainland China, would facilitate the achievement of United States objectives throughout Asia. Therefore, United States policies and courses of action in Asia should be determined in the light of their effect upon the solution of the central problem, that of China.

b. The communist attack in Korea has transformed the Far East into a theater of combat. Whether the Kremlin or Peiping intends that hostilities be extended into other areas of Asia or aggression committed in another part of the world is as yet unknown. The United States must expect either eventuality. In any case, the United States should use the resources which can be disposed, without unacceptably jeopardizing our objectives elsewhere, to prevent the communists from achieving a victory in Korea and to build resistance to communist encroachments in Asia.

c. Our ability to achieve national objectives in Asia will be conditioned by the capabilities and global commitments of the United States and by the weight of the effort the enemy is willing and able to make. Consequently, there is required a constant and careful scrutiny of policies and actions on the basis of which decisions can be made which will advance us toward our ultimate objectives without sacrificing immediate security interests.

7. The guiding principle of U. S. foreign policy as it relates to meeting the threat of Soviet aggression is the promotion of the establishment of a system of collective security based on the principles of the UN Charter. The United States, is consequently forced inevitably to weigh elements of policy toward Asia against their effect upon the free world coalition, a coalition fundamental to our world-wide struggle for security against Soviet aggression.

8. The principal obstacles to the execution of United States policy in pursuit of its objectives in the Far East are as follows:

a. The policy and action of the Soviet Union.

(1) The Soviet Communists have historically considered Asia as one of their principal objectives; Bolshevik ideology devotes a prominent place to the capture of the "colonial and semi-colonial" areas of the world, by which is meant principally Asia. Soviet policy in Asia has been aided by the fact that communists have been successful to a large degree in subverting indigenous nationalist movements; the capture of these movements has been a goal of Kremlin policy.

(2) The Kremlin has not yet resorted to the large-scale and open employment of Soviet armed forces, although the aggression by both North Koreans and Chinese Communists indicates that the Kremlin is willing to undertake greater risks than in the past.

(3) The Kremlin, besides supplying and directing leadership of communist parties in Asia, and building centers of subversion, infiltration, and revolution, is providing military assistance to communist forces in Asia, both in materiel and in technical personnel.

(4) The fact that the Soviet threat is world-wide in character has prevented the concentration of free world effort against the various forms of communist aggression in Asia. The combination of political, military, technical and propaganda support given by the Soviet Government to the communist assault in Asia confronts the United States and its principal allies with a major challenge which vitally affects world power positions.

b. The policy and action of Communist China.

(1) Communist China is already involved in a major military aggression in Korea, is publicly committed to an attempt to seize Formosa, may attack Hong Kong, and may increase its support to Ho Chih Minh to include the use of Chinese forces in Indochina. Communist success in these efforts would expose the remainder of Southeast Asia to attack and would sharply increase the threat to Japan and the remainder of the off-shore island chain. Such prospects lend greater effectiveness to the ordinary communist techniques of penetration and subversion and cause many Asians to remain on the side lines during the present phase of the struggle.



## Strengthening of Southeast Asia

41. It is important to the United States that the mainland states of Southeast Asia remain under non-communist control and continue to improve their internal conditions. These states are valuable to the free world because of their strategic position, abundant natural resources, including strategic materials in short supply in the United States, and their large population. Moreover, these states, if adequately developed and organized, could serve to protect and contribute to the economic progress and military defense of the Pacific off-shore islands from Japan to New Zealand. Communist control of both China and Southeast Asia would place Japan in a dangerously vulnerable position and therefore seriously affect the entire security position of the United States in the Pacific. The fall of the mainland states would result in changing the status of the off-shore island chain from supporting bases to front line positions. Further, it would tend to isolate these base areas from each other, requiring a review of our entire strategic deployment of forces. Communist domination of the area would alleviate considerably the food problem of China and make available to the USSR considerable quantities of strategically important materials.

42. In the absence of overt Chinese Communist aggression in Southeast Asia, the general problems facing the United States in this area are: the real threat of Chinese Communist invasion and subversion, the political instability and weak leadership of the non-communist governments, the low standards of living and under-developed resources of the peoples of the area, the prevailing prejudice against colonialism and Western "interference" and the insensitivity to the danger of communist imperialism. Further acts of communist aggression in Southeast Asia can be expected to stimulate resistance on the part of countries which have thus far failed to take a positive stand.

43. Therefore, the general objectives of the United States in Southeast Asia are: (a) to contribute to the will and ability of all countries in the region to resist communism from within and without, and (b) to aid in the political, economic and social advancement of the area. For this purpose, the United States has developed support programs to strengthen the governments' administrative and military capabilities, to improve living standards, to encourage pro-Western alignments, and to stave off communist intervention.

44. Chinese Communist conquest of Indochina, Thailand and Burma, by military force and internal subversion, would seriously threaten the critical security interests of the United States. However, in the event of overt Chinese aggression, it is not now in the over-all security interests of the United States to commit any United States armed forces to the defense of the mainland states of Southeast Asia. Therefore, the United States cannot guarantee the



denial of Southeast Asia to communism. The United States should continue its present support programs to strengthen the will and ability to resist the Chinese Communists, to render Communist military operations as costly as possible, and to gain time for the United States and its allies to build up the defenses of the off-shore chain and weaken communist power at its source.

45. The United States should develop its support programs in such form and in such manner in each country as will effectively stimulate the use of its resources to the advantage of the free world, contribute to the development of sound economies and adequate military establishments, and take into account the ability of each country to absorb and its willingness to put to effective use American aid. In any instance where a government friendly to the United States is conducting actual resistance to internal subversive forces or overt aggression, the United States should favorably consider contributions to the ability of such a government to continue resistance.

46. The general security problems of Southeast Asia are the subject of military staff conversations among the United States, the United Kingdom and France.

47. Programs of information and educational exchange should be continued in the countries of Southeast Asia and should be designed to develop on the part of the governments and peoples of the area, realization, and action in accordance therewith, of the vital objectives which they share with the United States and of the ways in which the achievement of these objectives are threatened by the aggressive purposes of Soviet Communism.

48. At the present time, the United States faces the following major problems in Southeast Asia:

a. Defense of Indochina. The loss of Indochina to communist control would greatly increase the threat to the other mainland states of Southeast Asia and to Indonesia. The Viet Minh with the aid of strong Chinese Communist military intervention can conquer Indochina. Therefore, the forces opposing the Viet Minh must rapidly increase their military strength. Increased anti-communist manpower must come from the Associated States, principally Vietnam.

b. Chinese Imperialism. The United States should expand and intensify the psychological warfare effort to increase an awareness in the area of the threat which Soviet and Chinese imperialism poses to the national independence, economic betterment and traditional ideals of each country in the region. The United States should seek to reduce the ties be-

tween the Chinese communities in Southeast Asia and the Peiping regime, to neutralize the pro-communist support among these communities, and to endeavor to direct the political power and economic wealth of the Chinese communities toward the support of the countries which they are resident.

c. The Role of Singapore and Malaya in the Defense of Southeast Asia. The location of the Malayan Peninsula makes it of great importance to Indonesia and Australia and New Zealand in the event Indochina and Thailand fall to the communists. Although the defense and internal security of Singapore and Malaya are British responsibilities, the Peninsula cannot be defended against an invasion from the north without outside support. Accordingly, the United States should coordinate its operational planning with the United Kingdom with respect to Malaya and adjacent areas.

d. The Alignment of Indonesia. Indonesia's strategic position, economic wealth including oil reserves, and political importance as an independent, non-communist nation are assets to the security of the United States in the Pacific. Consequently, the policies and actions of the United States must be directed to strengthening and maintaining the non-communist political orientation of the government and to promoting economic health and development. At present the Indonesian Government is pursuing a policy of political neutrality. The United States must endeavor to influence Indonesia toward greater participation in measures which promote the security of the area and toward solidarity with the free world. Among the factors which affect United States aid to Indonesia are (1) the results to be achieved in terms of United States national interests, (2) the attitude of the Indonesian government, (3) the needs of Indonesia, and (4) the ability to use aid profitably. The United States should give particular attention to the problem of technical assistance, in view of the serious lack of leadership and trained personnel in the country.

49. With respect to Southeast Asia, the United States should:

a. Continue its present support programs to strengthen the will and ability to resist communist encroachment, to render communist military operations as costly as possible, and to gain time for the United States and its allies to build up the defense of the off-shore chain.

b. Continue programs of information and educational exchange in the countries of Southeast Asia.



c. Encourage the countries of Southeast Asia to restore and expand their commerce with each other and the rest of the free world, stimulate the flow of the raw material resources of the area to the free world, and assist in establishing small arms production in appropriate locations in Southeast Asia under suitable controls.

d. In Indochina:

(1) Continue to increase the military effectiveness of French units and the size and equipment of indigenous units by providing timely and suitable military assistance without relieving the French authorities of their basic military responsibilities or committing United States armed forces.

(2) Continue to encourage internal autonomy and progressive social and economic reforms.

(3) Continue to promote international support for the three Associated States.

e. In Indonesia, the United States should seek to strengthen the non-communist political orientation of the government, promote the economic development of Indonesia, and influence Indonesia toward greater participation in measures which support the security of the area and Indonesian solidarity with the free world.



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ORIGINAL  
DOCUMENT

From Saigon, desp. 132, Sept. 6, 1951.  
Enclosure no. 5 , UNCLASSIFIED

US invites Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos to participate  
in signing of Japanese Peace Treaty.

No. 11

The Legation of the United States of America presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Vietnam and has the honor to transmit the following message on behalf of the United States Government.

"The Government of the United States of America and His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have the honor to enclose herewith two copies of a draft of the Peace Treaty with Japan, of two declarations which have been prepared on the basis of earlier drafts and observations thereon by countries which were actively concerned in the Japanese war. The draft protocol which is open for signature at any time has been proposed by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom and is circulated for the information and comment of these countries whose domestic law permits them to sign it. It is believed that the enclosed draft treaty and declarations combine and reconcile, as far as is practicable, the point of view of all the allied powers which were at war with Japan and will establish, with Japan, a just and durable peace.

"The Government of the United States of America has the honor to invite your Government to a conference for conclusion and signature of a treaty of peace with Japan on the terms of the enclosed text. The conference will convene at San Francisco, United States of America, on September 4, 1951.

"Invitations have also been sent to the allied powers at war with Japan, except where special circumstances exist.

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"The Government of Japan has advised the Government of the United States of America that it will be represented at San Francisco by duly accredited delegates empowered to sign the treaty and declarations on behalf of the Government of Japan.

"It will be appreciated if your Government will, in due course, notify the Government of the United States of America at Washington whether it accepts this invitation.

"Any inquiries relating to the organization of the conference and the provision of facilities for duty [sic] accredited delegates, their advisers and staff, may be addressed to the Division of International Conferences, Department of State, Washington 25, D.C."

The Legation will be pleased to be of any assistance it can in providing facilities to the Vietnamese delegation or in communicating with the Department of State or in other ways.

American Legation,

Saigon, August 22, 1951.

UNCLASSIFIED



ECONOMIC COOPERATION AGREEMENT  
BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA<sup>1</sup>  
AND THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM<sup>1</sup>

Entered into force September 7, 1951

The Government of the United States of America and  
the Government of Vietnam:

Recognizing that individual liberty, free institutions, and independence depend largely upon sound economic conditions and stable international economic relationships;

Considering that the Congress of the United States of America has enacted legislation enabling the United States to furnish assistance to the Government of Vietnam in order that the Government of Vietnam, through its own individual efforts and through concerted effort with the other Associated States and other parts of the French Union, with other countries or with the United Nations, may achieve such objectives;

Desiring to set forth the understandings which govern the furnishing of assistance by the Government of the United States of America, the receipt of such assistance by the Government of Vietnam and the measures which the two Governments will take individually and together in furtherance of the above objectives: with due regard to accords and agreements previously entered into by the High Contracting Parties;

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I

The Government of the United States of America will, subject to the terms and conditions prescribed by law and to arrangements provided for in this Agreement, furnish the Government of Vietnam such economic and technical assistance as may be requested by it and agreed to by the Government of the United States of America. The Government of Vietnam will cooperate with the Government of the United States of America to assure that procurement will be at reasonable prices and on reasonable terms. Commodities or

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<sup>1</sup>Similar agreements were also signed with Cambodia and Laos (Treaties and other International Acts Series 2343 and 2344).

services furnished under the present Agreement may be distributed within Vietnam on terms and conditions agreed upon between the two Governments.

## ARTICLE II

In order to assure maximum benefits to the people of Vietnam from the assistance to be furnished under the present Agreement by the United States of America, the Government of Vietnam will use its best endeavors:

A. To assure efficient and practical use of all resources available and to assure that the commodities and services obtained under this Agreement are used for purposes consistent therewith and with the general objectives indicated in the aid program presented by the Government of Vietnam and agreed to by the Government of the United States of America.

B. To promote the economic development of Vietnam on a sound basis and to achieve such economic objectives as may be agreed upon.

C. To assure the stability of its currency and the validity of its rate of exchange, and generally to assure confidence in its financial stability.

D. To cooperate with other countries to reduce barriers to international trade, and to take appropriate measures singly and in cooperation with other countries to eliminate public or private restrictive practices hindering domestic or international trade.

## ARTICLE III

The Governments will, upon request of either of them, consult regarding any matter relating to the application of this Agreement or operations thereunder. The Government of Vietnam will provide detailed information necessary to carrying out the provisions of this Agreement including a quarterly statement on the use of funds, commodities, and services received under the present Agreement and to evaluate the effectiveness of assistance furnished or contemplated.

## ARTICLE IV

The Government of Vietnam agrees to receive a



Special Technical and Economic Mission which will discharge the responsibilities of the Government of the United States of America under the present Agreement and upon appropriate notification from the Government of the United States of America will consider this Special Mission and its personnel as part of the Diplomatic Mission of the United States of America in Vietnam for the purpose of enjoying the privileges and immunities accorded to that Diplomatic Mission and its personnel of comparable rank. The Government of Vietnam will further give full cooperation to the Special Mission, including the provision of facilities necessary for observation and review of the carrying out of this Agreement including the use of assistance furnished under it.

#### ARTICLE V

1. This Agreement shall take effect upon notification by the Government of Vietnam to the Government of the United States of America that all necessary legal requirements in connection with the conclusion of this Agreement by the Government of Vietnam have been fulfilled.[1] This Agreement shall continue in force until the date agreed upon by the two Governments or may be terminated three months after a written notification has been given by either of the two Governments.

2. The Annex to this Agreement forms an integral part thereof.

3. This Agreement shall be registered with the Secretary General of the United Nations.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, duly authorized for the purpose, have signed the present Agreement.

DONE AT SAIGON this Seventh day of September, 1951 in duplicate, in each of the English, French, and Vietnamese languages, all texts authentic except that in the case of divergencies, the English and French texts shall govern.

For the Government  
of the  
United States of America

Edmund A. Gullion  
[seal]

For the Government  
of  
Vietnam

Nguyen-Khac-Ve

1 Sept. 7, 1951.



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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FOR THE PRESS

November 6, 1951

NO. 996

FOR RELEASE AT 11:00 P.M., E.S.T., (8:00 P.M., P.S.T.)  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1951....

ADDRESS BY THE HONORABLE DEAN RUSK, ASSISTANT  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS, TO  
THE SEATTLE WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL, SEATTLE,  
WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1951

. . . . .

In Indo-China, the United States has taken a friendly interest in the efforts made to resolve points of difference between France and the Associated States and has vigorously supported the determination of France and of the Associated States to restore security and order in the country. Many Americans have been troubled in the past about the issue of colonialism in Indo-China. We believe that that question is well on the way to solution, that the peoples of the Associated States are free to assume the extensive responsibility for their own affairs that has been accorded them by treaties with France. It is not surprising that doubts remain on this point in Indo-China, among other countries of Asia, and among some heritage of bitterness and suspicion, those who have recently passed through a colonial experience are sensitive and distrustful of western influence, and the slowness with which the Associated States have been able to assume the responsibility which is awaiting them has not demonstrated the extent to which the issue of colonialism has been resolved. The real issue in Indo-China is whether the peoples of that land will be permitted to work out their future as they see fit or whether they will be subjected to a Communist reign of terror and be absorbed by force into the new colonialism of a Soviet Communist empire. In this situation, it is generally agreed in the United States that we should support and assist the armies of France and of the Associated States in meeting the armed threat in Indo-China and should furnish economic and technical assistance to the Associated States as they shoulder the heavy burdens of independence.

. . . . .

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OUTGOING TELEGRAM  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JAN 15 6:42 PM '52

Amlegation SAIGON 974

Tripartite MIL conversations held Washington JAN 11 concerning defense SEA were convened through direct NEGOTS between three Chiefs of Staff. Only at last moment were single RETS of each FONOFF permitted to be present as observers. DEPT had no opportunity contribute to agenda nor formally participate in discussions. Nevertheless LEG TELS concerning this SUBJ were and are most helpful.

Part one of agenda entitled "Exchange of Views with Respect to Southeast Asia" consists of two RTS.

1. Problems of SEA in light of world wide implications of situation, and
2. Defense SEA including action in event of deterioration of situation.

Part two concerned recommendations of Singapore Conference.

Summary of discussions covering both Parts has been given to PARTLET for transmittal to LEG. He is expected to arrive Saigon APPROX JAN 26.

FOL IS

FOL is brief summary of discussions on Part one.

1. GEN Bradley advised GEN Juin that he was unable to commit his GOVT at this time as to extent and character of US MIL assistance in event of massive CHI intervention. This SUBJ being considered at highest official level as matter of urgency. Field Marshal Slim concurred. Juin appealed for US and UK dispatch of air and naval support if not ground forces. Air cover necessary to allow his forces to retire on Haiphong.

2. Juin stated, under INSTRPS from his GOVT, that FOL massive CHI intervention FR Union forces WLD retire to Haiphong and fight to last man. Air cover needed for this operation while naval assistance needed in evacuating 50,000 FR and Indochinese civilians. Juin stated that if Haiphong held, invasion of IC difficult or impossible.

3. Three Chiefs agreed to recommend to their GOVTS the transmittal of a declaration to Red China that aggression against SEA WLD bring certain retaliation from the three powers, not necessarily limited to the area of aggression. An AD HOC COMITE of REPS of the three powers plus AUSTRAL and NZ was appointed to

study

study and report urgently on the measures the  
give GOVTS might take singly or jointly in event  
Red China failed heed warning. Above two steps  
resulted from mutual recognition that present  
problems consist of (1) discouragement against  
aggression and (2) retaliation.

4. All agreed that CHI aggression against SEA  
might well mean war with China.

5. Neither the recommendation as to proposed decla-  
ration nor the report of AD HOC COMITE have been  
recd by DEIT.

6. It SHLD be noted that the language of proposed  
declaration must still be approved by each of the five  
GOVTS concerned as well as joint agreement reached  
concerning method and timing of transmittal to Red  
China. Likewise, the recommendations of AD HOC  
COMITE which WLD presumably be of very broad nature  
WLD necessarily influence course of action of the  
five GOVTS with respect to transmittal proposed  
declaration.

Bartlett has been fully briefed and LEG will be informed  
of developments as they occur.

ACHESON

FE:IS:REHoey



February 13, 1952

NSC STAFF STUDY

on

UNITED STATES OBJECTIVES AND COURSES OF ACTION WITH  
RESPECT TO COMMUNIST AGGRESSION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA\*

THE PROBLEM

1. To determine the policy of the United States toward the countries of Southeast Asia, and in particular, the courses of action which may be taken by the United States to strengthen and coordinate resistance to communism on the part of the governments and peoples of the area, to prevent Chinese Communist aggression, and to meet such aggression should it occur.

ANALYSIS

I. CONSEQUENCES TO THE UNITED STATES OF COMMUNIST DOMINATION  
OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

2. Communist domination of Southeast Asia, whether by means of overt invasion, subversion, or accommodation on the part of the indigenous governments, would be critical to United States security interests. Communist success in this area would spread doubt and fear among other threatened non-communist countries as to the ability of the United States and the United Nations to halt communist aggression elsewhere. It would strengthen the claim that the advance of communism is inexorable and encourage countries vulnerable to Soviet pressure to adopt policies of neutralism or accommodation. Successful overt Chinese Communist aggression in this area, especially if achieved without encountering more than token resistance on the part of the United States or the United Nations, would have critical psychological and political consequences which would probably include the relatively swift alignment of the rest of Asia and thereafter or the Middle East to communism, thereby endangering the stability and security of Europe. Such a communist success might nullify the psychological advantages accruing to the free world by reason of its response to the aggression in Korea.

3. The fall of Southeast Asia would underline the apparent economic advantages to Japan of association with the communist-dominated Asian sphere. Exclusion of Japan from trade with Southeast Asia would seriously affect the Japanese

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\*The term Southeast Asia is used herein to mean Indochina, Burma, Thailand, the Malay Peninsula, and Indonesia.

economy, and increase Japan's dependence on United States aid. In the long run the loss of Southeast Asia, especially Malaya and Indonesia, could result in such economic and political pressures in Japan as to make it extremely difficult to prevent Japan's eventual accommodation to the Soviet Bloc.

4. Southeast Asia, especially Malaya and Indonesia, is the principal world source of natural rubber and tin. Access to these materials by the Western Powers and their denial to the Soviet Bloc is important at all times and particularly in the event of global war. Communist control over the rice surpluses of the Southeast Asian mainland would provide the USSR with a powerful economic weapon in its relations with other countries of the Far East. Indonesia is a secondary source of petroleum whose importance would be enhanced by the denial to the Western Powers of petroleum sources in the Middle East. Malaya is the largest net dollar earner for the United Kingdom, and its loss would seriously aggravate the economic problems facing the UK.

5. Communist control of all of Southeast Asia would render the United States position in the Pacific offshore island chain precarious and would seriously jeopardize fundamental United States security interests in the Far East. The extension of communist power via Burma would augment the communist threat to India and Pakistan and strengthen the groups within those countries which favor accommodation. However, such an event would probably result in a stiffer attitude toward communism on the part of the Indian government.

6. Communist domination of mainland Southeast Asia would place unfriendly forces astride the most direct and best-developed sea and air routes between the Western Pacific and India and the Near East. In the event of global war, the development of Soviet submarine and air bases in mainland Southeast Asia might compel the detour of U.S. and allied shipping and air transportation in the Southeast Asia region via considerably longer alternate routes to the south. This extension of friendly lines of communication would hamper U.S. strategic movements in this region and tend to isolate the major non-communist bases in the Far East--the offshore island chain and Australia--from existing bases in East Africa and the Near and Middle East, as well as from potential bases on the Indian sub-continent.

7. Besides disrupting established lines of communication in the area, the denial of actual military facilities in mainland Southeast Asia--in particular, the loss of the major naval operating bases at Singapore--would compel the utilization of



less desirable peripheral bases. Soviet exploitation of the naval and air bases in mainland Southeast Asia probably would be limited by the difficulties of logistic support but would, nevertheless, increase the threat to existing lines of communication.

## II. REGIONAL STRATEGY

8. The continued integrity of the individual countries of Southeast Asia is to a large extent dependent upon a successful coordination of political and military measures for the entire area. The development of practical measures aimed at preventing the absorption of these countries into the Soviet orbit must therefore recognize this interdependence and must, in general, seek courses of action for the area as a whole.

9. However, it must be recognized that the governments and peoples of Southeast Asia have little in common other than their geographic proximity and their newly awakened nationalism and anti-colonialism. For the most part, their economies are competitive rather than complementary. The countries are divided internally and from each other by language and ethnic differences. The several nationalities and tribal groups are the heirs of centuries of warfare, jealousy, and mutual distrust. In addition, their present governments are sharply divided in their attitudes toward the current East-West struggle. The governments of the three Associated States of Indochina are not recognized by any other Asian states except Nationalist China and Thailand.

10. In the strategic sense, the defense of Tonkin is important to the defense of mainland Southeast Asia. If Communist forces should succeed in driving the French Union forces from Tonkin, military action in the remainder of Indochina might have to be limited to delaying action and the perimeter defense of certain coastal areas pending reinforcement or evacuation. With the appearance of communist success, native support would probably swing increasingly to the Viet Minh.

11. Thailand has no common border with China and no strong internal communist element. It adjoins areas of Indochina now controlled by the Viet Minh, but the border areas are remote and difficult. Hence, communist seizure of Thailand is improbable except as a result of the prior loss of either Burma or Indochina.

12. Communist control of either Indochina or Burma would expose Thailand to infiltration and severe political pressures,



as well as to the threat of direct attack. Unless substantial outside aid were forthcoming, it is possible that in such a case, political pressure alone would be sufficient to bring about the accommodation of Thailand to international communism within a year. However, substantial aid, together with assurance of support by the United States and the UN might be sufficient to preserve a non-communist government in Thailand in spite of any form of pressure short of overt attack.

13. Thailand would be difficult to defend against an overt attack from the east by way of the traditional invasion route through Cambodia. Thailand is more defensible against attack from Burma owing to the mountainous terrain and poor communications of the Thai-Burmese border. In either case it might be possible to defend an area in southern Thailand centering on Bangkok. Since any attack on Thailand would necessarily be preceded by communist encroachment on Indochina or Burma, the defense of Thailand would probably be part of a broader pattern of hostilities.

14. If the loss of Thailand followed the loss of Burma, the defense of Indochina would be out-flanked; and any substantial communist forces based on Thailand would render the position of the French Union Forces in Indochina untenable in the long run. If the collapse of Thailand followed the loss of Indochina, the psychological and political consequences would accelerate the deterioration of Burma. However, the military consequences in such a case would be less immediate, owing to the difficult terrain of the Thai-Burmese border country.

15. Communist control of Thailand would aggravate the already serious security problem presented by the Thai-Malayan border and greatly increase the difficulties of the British security forces in Malaya. However, assuming control of the sea by the Western Powers, Malaya offers a defensible position against even a full-scale land attack. The Kra Isthmus of the Malayan Peninsula would afford the best secondary line of defense against total communist domination of Southeast Asia and the East Indies. Such a defense would effectively protect Indonesia against external communist pressure. By thus defending Malaya and Indonesia, the anti-communist forces would continue to hold the most important strategic material resources of the area, as well as strategic air and naval bases and lines of communication.

16. The strategic interdependence of the countries in Southeast Asia, and the cumulative effect of a successful

communist penetration in any one area, point to the importance of action designed to forestall any aggression by the Chinese Communists. The most effective possible deterrent would be a joint warning by the United States and certain other governments regarding the grave consequences of Chinese aggression against Southeast Asia, and implying the threat of retaliation against Communist China itself. Such a warning should be issued in conjunction with other nations, including at least the United Kingdom, France, Australia and New Zealand. Participation in such a warning involves all the risks and disadvantages of a precommitment to take action in future and unknown circumstances. However, these disadvantages must be weighed against the alternative of a costly effort to repel Chinese invasion after it has actually occurred. A second, but probably less effective, means of attempting to deter such an invasion would be to focus world attention on the continuing threat of Chinese Communist aggression against Southeast Asia and to make clear to the Soviet and Chinese Communist Governments the fact that the United States views the situation in Southeast Asia with great concern. In fact, statements along these lines have already been made. Such means might also include a Peace Observation Commission, if desired and requested by the countries concerned, public addresses by U.S. officials, and "show the flag" visits by naval and air units.

17. The Chinese Nationalist forces represent considerable reserve upon which to draw in the event of military action against Communist China. The deficiency in equipment and training seriously limits the possible employment of these forces at present, however, continuation of our training and supply efforts should serve to alleviate these deficiencies. The manner of employment of these forces is beset not only with military but also with political difficulties. Hence the decision as to the best use of these forces cannot be made at this time. Nevertheless, we should be prepared to make the best practicable use of this military augmentation in light of the circumstances existing at the time.



### III. INDOCHINA

18. In the long run, the security of Indochina against communism will depend upon the development of native governments able to command the support of the masses of the people and national armed forces capable of relieving the French of the major burden of maintaining internal security. Some progress is being made in the formation and development of national armies. However, the Vietnamese Government has been slow to assume its responsibilities and has continued to suffer from a lack of strong leadership. It has had to contend with: (a) lingering Vietnamese suspicion of any French-supported regime, combined with the apathetic and "fence-sitting" attitude of the bulk of the people; (b) the difficulty, common to all new and inexperienced governments, of training the necessary personnel and building an efficient administration; and (c) the failure of factional and sectional groups to unite in a concerted national effort.

19. The U.S. economic aid program for Indochina has as its objectives to increase production and thereby offset the military drain on the economy of the Associated States; to increase popular support for the Government by improving the effectiveness of Government services; to make the Government and the people aware of America's interest in their independence and welfare; and to use economic aid as a means of supporting the military effort. Because of their strained budgetary situation, the Associated States cannot meet the local currency costs of the projects; about 60 percent of the program funds is, therefore, devoted to importing needed commodities which are sold to generate counterpart.

20. The military situation in Indochina continues to be one of stalemate. Increased U.S. aid to the Franco-Vietnamese forces has been an essential factor in enabling them to withstand recent communist attacks. However, Chinese aid to the Viet Minh in the form of logistic support, training, and technical advisors is increasing at least at a comparable rate. The prospect is for a continuation of the present stalemate in the absence of intervention by important forces other than those presently engaged.

21. While it is unlikely under the present circumstances that the French will suffer a military defeat in Indochina, there is a distinct possibility that the French Government will soon conclude that France cannot continue indefinitely to carry the burden of her total military commitments. From the French point of view, the possible means of lessening the



present burden include: (1) a settlement with the communists in Indochina; (2) an agreement to internationalize the action in Indochina; (3) reduction of the NATO obligations of France.

22. A settlement based on a military armistice would be more complicated in Indochina than in the case of Korea. Much of Indochina is not firmly under the control of either side, but subject to occasional forays from both. Areas controlled by the opposing sides are interspersed, and lines of contact are fluid. Because of the weakness of the native governments, the dubious attitudes of the population even in areas under French control, and the certainty of continued communist pressure, it is highly probable that any settlement based on a withdrawal of French forces would be tantamount to handing over Indochina to communism. The United States should therefore continue to oppose any negotiated settlement with the Viet Minh.

23. In the event that information and circumstances point to the conclusion that France is no longer prepared to carry the burden in Indochina, or if France presses for a sharing of the responsibility for Indochina, whether in the UN or directly with the U.S. Government, the United States should oppose a French withdrawal and consult with the French and British concerning further measures to be taken to safeguard the area from communist domination. In anticipation of these possibilities, the United States should urgently re-examine the situation with a view to determining:

a. Whether U.S. participation in an international undertaking would be warranted.

b. The general nature of the contributions which the United States, with other friendly governments, might be prepared to make.

24. A cessation of hostilities in Korea would greatly increase the logistical capability of the Chinese Communists to support military operations in Indochina. A Korean peace would have an even more decisive effect in increasing Chinese air capabilities in that area. Recent intelligence reports indicate increased Chinese Communist military activity in the Indochinese border area. If the Chinese Communists directly intervene with large forces over and above those introduced as individuals or in small units, the French would probably be driven back to a beachhead around Haiphong. The French should be able to hold this beachhead for only a limited time at best in the absence of timely and substantial outside support.



25. In view of the world-wide reaction to overt aggression in Korea, Communist China may prefer to repeat in Indochina the method of "volunteer" intervention. Inasmuch as the French do not control the border between China and Indochina nor large areas north of Hanoi, it may be difficult to detect the extent of preparation for such intervention. It is important to U.S. security interests to maintain the closest possible consultation with the French Government on the buildup of Chinese Communist intervention in Indochina. The Government of France has agreed to consult with the United States before it requests UN or other international action to oppose Chinese Communist aggression in Indochina in order that the two countries may jointly evaluate the extent of Chinese Communist intervention.

26. If it is thus determined that Chinese Communist forces (including volunteers) have overtly intervened in the conflict in Indochina, or are covertly participating to such an extent as to jeopardize retention of the Tonkin Delta by the French forces, the United States should support the French to the greatest extent possible, preferably under the auspices of the UN. It is by no means certain that an appropriate UN resolution could be obtained. Favorable action in the UN would depend upon a change in the attitude of those governments which view the present regime in Indochina as a continuation of French colonialism. A new communist aggression might bring about a reassessment of the situation on the part of these governments and an increased recognition of the danger. Accordingly, it is believed that a UN resolution to oppose the aggression could be passed in the General Assembly by a small margin.

27. Even if it is not possible to obtain a UN resolution in such a case, the United States should seek the maximum possible international support for and participation in any international collective action in support of France and the Associated States. The United States should take appropriate military action against Communist China as part of a UN collective action or in conjunction with France and the United Kingdom and other friendly governments. However, in the absence of such support, it is highly unlikely that the United States would act unilaterally. It is probable however, that the United States would find some support and token participation at least from the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth countries.

28. The U.S. forces which would be committed, and the manner of their employment, as well as the military equipment



which could be furnished to bolster the French Union forces, would be dependent upon certain factors which cannot now be predicted with accuracy. These include the extent of progress in U.S. rearmament, whether or not hostilities in Korea were continuing, and strategic developments in other parts of the world. It would be desirable to avoid the use of major U.S. ground forces in Indochina. Other effective means of opposing the aggression would include naval, air and logistical support of the French Union forces, naval blockade of Communist China, and attacks by land and carrier-based aircraft on military targets in Communist China. The latter could be effective against the long, tenuous, and vulnerable supply lines by which Chinese operations in Indochina would have to be supported. In the event of a forced evacuation, U.S. forces might provide cover and assistance. United Kingdom participation in these measures might well result in the seizure of Hong Kong by the Chinese Communists.

29. It is recognized that the commitment of U.S. military forces against Communist China would: (a) increase the risk of general hostilities in the Far East, including Soviet participation under cover of the existing Sino-Soviet agreements; (b) involve U.S. military forces in another Asiatic peripheral action, thus detracting from U.S. capabilities to conduct a global war in the near future; (c) arouse public opposition to "another Korea"; and (d) imply willingness to use U.S. military forces in other critical areas subject to communist aggression. Nevertheless, by failing to take action, the United States would permit the communists to obtain, at little or no cost, a victory of major world consequence.

30. Informed public opinion might support use of U.S. forces in Indochina regardless of sentiment against "another Korea" on the basis that: (a) Indochina is of far greater strategic importance than Korea; (b) the confirmation of UN willingness to oppose aggression with force, demonstrated at such a high cost in Korea, might be nullified by the failure to commit UN forces in Indochina; and (c) a second instance of aggression by the Chinese Communists would justify measures not subject to the limitations imposed upon the UN action in Korea.

31. The military action contemplated herein would constitute, in effect, a war against Communist China which would be limited only as to its objectives, but would not be subject to any geographic limitations. Employment of U.S. forces in a de facto war without a formal declaration would raise questions which would make it desirable to consult with key members of both parties in Congress in order to obtain their prior concurrence in the courses of action contemplated.



# SPECIAL ESTIMATE

## CONSEQUENCES OF CERTAIN POSSIBLE US COURSES OF ACTION WITH RESPECT TO INDOCHINA, BURMA, OR THAILAND

SE-22

29 February 1952

Advance Copy for the NSC

In order to expedite delivery, this estimate is being given a special preliminary distribution.

The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Joint Staff participated with the Central Intelligence Agency in the preparation of this estimate. All members of the Intelligence Advisory Committee concurred in this estimate on 28 February 1952: See, however, footnotes to paragraphs 1, 2, and 3b.

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.

29 February 1952

CONSEQUENCES OF CERTAIN POSSIBLE US COURSES OF  
ACTION WITH RESPECT TO INDOCHINA, BURMA, OR  
THAILAND

THE PROBLEM

To estimate the consequences of certain possible US courses of action with respect to an identifiable Chinese Communist military intervention\* in Indochina, Burma, or Thailand.

ASSUMPTION

The United Kingdom, France, Australia, and New Zealand will join the United States in warning Communist China that the five powers will meet Chinese Communist

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\* The term "identifiable Chinese Communist military intervention" is intended to cover either an open and acknowledged military intervention or an unacknowledged military intervention of such a scale and nature that its existence could be demonstrated.

military intervention in Southeast Asia with military counteraction. Whether or not the four other powers will join the US in such a warning is beyond the scope of this estimate. We are also unable to assess which of various conceivable methods of transmitting a warning would have the greatest deterrent effect.

## ESTIMATE

### I. THE EFFECT OF A JOINT WARNING AGAINST CHINESE COMMUNIST MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

#### On Communist Intentions

1. We do not believe that a joint warning against an "identifiable military intervention" by the Chinese Communists in Southeast Asia would tend to provoke such intervention. If, however, the Chinese Communists contemplate an early "identifiable military intervention" in Southeast Asia, or if in the future they should contemplate such an intervention, a joint warning by the five powers would tend to deter them.\*

2. Even in the absence of a joint formal warning, the Chinese Communists probably estimate that "identifiable

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\* The Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State, would add the following sentence: "On the other hand, if the Communist leaders conclude from Western actions and statements that the West intends to attack Communist China regardless of Communist actions in Southeast Asia, the deterrent effect of a warning would be nullified."



military intervention" in Southeast Asia would entail substantial risk of joint military counteraction, and that such a risk is unwarranted in view of the prospects for further Communist gains in Southeast Asia without such intervention. They may, however, discount this risk, estimating that there are differences in policy among the five powers and that these powers may not be able or willing to take timely\* and effective military counteraction.

3. The effectiveness of a joint warning as a deterrent would depend in large measure on Communist conviction that:

- a. The five powers were not bluffing, and were united among themselves as to the military counteraction to be taken.
- b. The five powers were actually capable of timely and effective military counteraction.\*
- c. The counteraction would be directed against Communist China itself as well as toward repelling the Chinese Communist intervention.

4. If the Communists were convinced on the foregoing points they would have to recognize that intervention in Southeast Asia would bring military counteraction, the probable

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\* The Special Assistant, Intelligence, Department of State holds the view that the Communists might be seriously concerned over the prospect of delayed military counteraction, even though they believed that timely counteraction need not be feared. He therefore believes that the words "timely and" should be omitted.

consequences of which would be general hostilities between Communist China and the five powers, if not global war. It is improbable, therefore, that they would initiate an "identifiable military intervention" in Indochina, Burma, or Thailand in the face of a joint warning by the five powers unless, on the basis of global considerations, they were willing to accept global war or at least general hostilities in the Far East. So far both Communist China and the USSR have shown a desire to localize the hostilities in Korea, Indochina, Burma, and Malaya. Furthermore, the favorable prospects for the success of present Communist tactics in Southeast Asia make probable a continuation of these tactics, unless, because of global considerations, the USSR and the Chinese Communists decide to accept grave risk of global war.

5. It is unlikely that additional signatories would increase the effectiveness of a joint warning. India would almost certainly refuse to participate in such a warning. It is improbable that Japan would take such a provocative step at this time and uncertain whether Thailand would do so. Few, if any, additional governments would join in a formal warning. Even if the Philippines, Japan, and Thailand did participate, the Communists would discount their adherence because of the military weakness of these countries and their existing ties with the West. The Communists would assume Chinese Nationalist support of the warning, whether or not explicitly expressed.

#### Other Effects.

6. A public joint warning would considerably improve the morale of the Thai and Vietnamese governments. In Burma

any encouragement derived from the warning would probably be offset by fear of involvement in a conflict between the great powers and by general suspicion of Western "imperialist" motives.

7. Elsewhere in East and South Asia the effect would be mixed. There would be a tendency, notably in Japan and the Philippines, to applaud this new manifestation of Western determination to check Communist aggression. On the other hand, the feeling would be widespread, especially in India and Indonesia, that the warning represented another instance of Western meddling in Asian affairs in pursuit of colonial objectives.

8. The effect of a warning on other countries probably would not be of major importance. A warning might well revive the fears in the smaller NATO powers regarding the dangers of general war or of an overextension of Western strength in the Far East, but it is unlikely that the basic attitudes of these countries would be changed.

9. The inclusion in the warning of a threat to use atomic weapons would produce a widespread and serious adverse reaction throughout the non-Communist world.

## II. INITIATION OF ACTION IN THE UN AND PROBABLE UN REACTIONS THERETO

10. If identifiable Chinese Communist military intervention in Southeast Asia actually took place, the UN could



probably be led to adopt countermeasures similar to those taken regarding Korea if the US, UK, and France advocated these measures. Action by the Security Council would certainly be blocked by a Soviet veto, but the matter could then be taken to the General Assembly within twenty-four hours under the "Uniting for Peace" resolution. The General Assembly would probably begin by calling for a cease-fire. Were this action to be ignored (as it presumably would be), a two-thirds majority could probably be mustered for resolutions condemning Communist China as an aggressor, recommending military counteraction to repel the aggression, and setting up a unified military command (though not necessarily under the US) to that end. Most UN members, however, because of their fears of a general war, would probably not be willing to give specific authorization for military counteraction against Communist China itself.

11. The willingness of the UN to adopt a stand against Communist intervention in Southeast Asia would be affected by the readiness of the victim to appeal to the UN. Indochina and Thailand would almost certainly be prompt in seeking UN assistance against Chinese Communist military intervention, but Burma might fail to make a timely appeal or fail to support an appeal by another UN member.

12. The degree of UN support for action against Chinese Communist aggression would hinge on various other factors. A large number of Arab and Asian countries probably would abstain if Indochina, which they regard as a French puppet, were invaded. The Arab-Asian reaction might be more favorable if the victim were Burma, which has followed a policy of non-involvement. If the five powers took any countermeasures without UN authorization, support of their action would be considerably lessened.

### III. PROBABLE EFFECTS OF THE EXECUTION OF JOINT MILITARY COUNTERMEASURES

#### Reaction of the Chinese Communist and Soviet Governments\*

13. If the Chinese Communists underlook an identifiable military intervention in Southeast Asia despite a joint warning against such a move, Chinese Communist planning unquestionably would have considered the likelihood of Western counteraction and would have been coordinated with the USSR. It is possible that such an intervention might be undertaken in the belief that the warning was a bluff, or at least that the countermeasures would be confined to the area of the aggression. In this case the execution of forceful military countermeasures might induce the Communists to seek a settlement. It appears far more likely, however, that such an intervention would be undertaken in full recognition of the risks involved. Under these circumstances, the immediate reaction to such military counteraction would probably be an attempt to accelerate Chinese Communist military operations. The Chinese Communists would probably attempt to extend their operations to other parts of Southeast Asia and, having already accepted the danger of expanded hostilities, they might well intensify operations in Korea and seize Hong Kong and Macao. Highest priority would be given, however, to the defense of Communist China.

14. Chinese Communist defiance of a joint warning would almost certainly involve the prior consent of the USSR. The degree of Soviet aid to Communist China would depend upon (a) the nature, scope, and degree of success of the Western counteraction, and (b) the degree to which the existence of the Peiping regime seemed to be jeopardized.

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\* SE-20: "The Probable Consequences of Certain Possible US Courses of Action with Respect to Communist China and Korea" treats most of the material discussed in this section in more detail.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON

COPY NO. 1

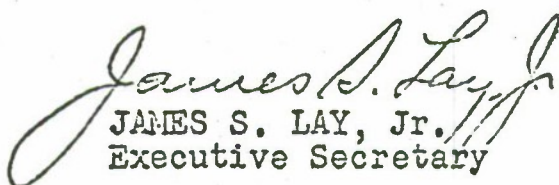
March 4, 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: United States Objectives and Courses of Action  
with Respect to Communist Aggression in South-  
east Asia

At the request of the Secretary of Defense the attached views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with respect to the reference report on the subject are circulated herewith for the information of the National Security Council in connection with Council consideration of NSC 124 at its meeting on March 5, 1952.

It is requested that special security precautions be observed in the handling of the enclosure.

  
JAMES S. LAY, Jr.  
Executive Secretary

cc: The Secretary of the Treasury  
The Director of Defense Mobilization



3 March 1952

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: United States Objectives and Courses  
of Action with Respect to Communist  
Aggression in Southeast Asia.

1. In accordance with the request contained in your memorandum, dated 16 February 1952, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have studied NSC 124, a draft statement of United States policy on the above subject, and a staff study relating thereto, both prepared by the National Security Council Staff. The views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff regarding the proposed policies enunciated therein are set forth below.

2. NSC 124 recommends United States courses of action in the several areas of Southeast Asia. Taken either separately or together, acceptance of most of these courses of action and hence of NSC 124, involves the making of a single basic decision. This basic decision is whether or not the United States, in support of the objective of NSC 124 stated as "to prevent the countries of Southeast Asia from passing into the Communist orbit," would be WILLING to take military action which would, in effect, constitute war against Communist China. An affirmation at this time within the National Security Council of such a willingness does not necessarily involve taking a decision now whether or not to go to war in advance of the nature and extent of the aggression becoming apparent. On the other hand, affirmation of this willingness should be made with a clear understanding of the implications which the adoption of these courses of action would entail. In addition, such affirmation of this willingness is essential in order to provide the basis for determining:

a. The cost of these courses of action, in terms of men, money, and materiel;

b. The impact of these courses of action upon the economy of the United States;

c. The impact of these courses of action upon United States military assistance programs with particular reference to the inevitable reduction in the United States contribution to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) effort; and

d. The firmness of support of our principal allies for our global policies generally and these courses of action in particular.

3. The military action, as proposed in NSC 124, would be limited as to its objectives, but it would not be subject to any geographic restrictions with respect to Communist China. In this connection, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that any new communist aggression in Asia undoubtedly would stem from a deliberate design, in the formulation of which the possibility of counteraction by the United States against the source of aggression would, in all probability, have been considered.

4. The making of such a decision now or in the eventuality of overt aggression by Communist China against a country of Southeast Asia is complicated by, among other things, the following:

a. Whether or not the United Nations would be willing to call upon its members to engage in hostilities with Communist China;

b. Whether or not the member nations of the United Nations would be willing to engage in military action against aggression by Communist China in Southeast Asia;

c. Whether or not the United Kingdom and France would be willing to engage directly in military action against Communist China itself, other than action limited to the area of and/or the approaches to the land battle with the aggressor forces;

d. The ability and the willingness of the United States to take the military actions involved including unilateral action against Communist China itself, in event of Communist Chinese military aggression in the countries of Southeast Asia. Such actions would call for considerable increase over current military production rates with a corresponding curtailment of the production of goods for the civilian economy; until increased U.S. production is achieved, these actions would reduce the military assistance programs to other nations, especially those in high priority.

e. The possible effect upon United States alliances in Europe and upon the United Nations organization itself if the United States Government should consider it necessary, in its own interests, to take military action unilaterally against Communist China; and



f. The implications and the political effects of a probable refusal by the United States to provide ground forces for collective United Nations action or for combined military operations in support of France and the United Kingdom in Southeast Asia.

5. The basic decision, in light of the factors set forth in paragraph 3 above, those developed in NSC 124, and the military considerations set forth herein, is essentially political in nature. Its resolution will have direct bearing upon future United States global strategy. Accordingly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that consideration by the members of the National Security Council itself of these factors and military considerations is necessary prior to any final decision regarding the policy statement in NSC 124.

6. The Joint Chiefs of Staff wish to report that, during the course of their preliminary discussions with representatives of the Chiefs of Staffs of the United Kingdom and France on the matter of possible courses of action to meet Chinese Communist aggression against Southeast Asia, the British and French military position opposed even the concept of action against Communist China other than that limited to the area of, or approaches to, the land battle in opposition to the aggressor forces. The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that the British and French would, at least initially, oppose taking military action against Communist China as a nation, even in the face of aggression.

7. The British and French appear to think almost exclusively in terms of defense, at least as far as Europe and Southeast Asia are concerned. Their unwillingness to take even those measures for the defense of Southeast Asia which are within their capability, indicates that they may not recognize the actual long-term danger to themselves involved in the possible loss of Southeast Asia.

8. Piecemeal actions by Soviet satellites, such as the overrunning of Southeast Asia, can eventually lead to attainment by the USSR of its objective, among others, of dominating the continent of Asia and possibly the continent of Europe. It is emphasized that each Communist gain directly involves a loss to the Western World.

9. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recognize that there would be grave danger to United States security interests if Southeast Asia should pass into the Communist orbit.

10. The military problems which would arise as a result



of any overt Chinese Communist aggression against Southeast Asia are different in character and in scope from those of Korea. The Joint Chiefs of Staff are of the opinion that any restrictions which would limit the military action taken in French Indochina, Thailand, and/or Burma to the area of, or the approaches to, the land battle in opposition to the aggressor forces would result in such military action becoming wholly defensive in character. Such action would, in their opinion, at best be indecisive and would probably extend over an indefinite period.

11. The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that military measures taken to prevent the Chinese Communists from gaining control of Southeast Asia by military aggression should, from the outset, be planned so as to offer a reasonable chance of ultimate success. After consideration of the military factors involved, the Joint Chiefs of Staff are of the opinion that in order to offer such chance of success, military operations in defense against Chinese Communist invasion of French Indochina, Thailand, and/or Burma must be accompanied by military action against the sources of that aggression, namely, Communist China itself. Accordingly, and in view of the foregoing, the Joint Chiefs of Staff would recommend, SOLELY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF MILITARY OPERATIONS, that a strong defense be maintained against such Chinese Communist aggression and that concurrent offensive operations be undertaken against the nation of Communist China. They would point out, however, that this course of action, while offering promise of ultimate success, might result in a long war, and an expensive one at least materiel-wise.

12. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, from the military point of view, must, in any event, oppose acceptance of all of the military commitments devolving from NSC 124 without a clear understanding that the United States must be accorded freedom of action and, if possible, support in the undertaking of appropriate military action to include action against Communist China itself. Failing such freedom of action, the United States should accept the possibility of loss of at least Indochina, Thailand, and Burma. Such acceptance would call for a United States policy which would limit United States military commitments in Southeast Asia to those necessary to cover and assist possible forced evacuations of the French and/or the British from their positions. The Joint Chiefs of Staff reaffirm their position that United States ground forces should not be committed in French Indochina, Thailand, or Burma and for the defense of those countries. Further, they strongly oppose the United States joining a combined military command for the defense of those countries.



13. Military action by the United States against Communist China would inevitably involve the acceptance of increased risks. Such risks, however, should not necessarily be an overriding deterrent to United States action. As NSC 48/5 points out, the risk of global war "should not preclude undertaking calculated risks against specific areas in the over-all interests of the United States."

14. If Communist China commits overt major acts of aggression against French Indochina, Thailand, or Burma and if in the face of such aggression the British and/or French refuse to offer either military or political support to possible United States action against Communist China itself, the effect of United States unilateral action upon our military alliances and positions in Europe as well as in Asia should be appraised and the risk calculated. Further, in such an eventuality, the validity of our alliances might well be re-examined.

15. In the light of all of the foregoing and, to meet the contingencies:

a. That Chinese Communist aggression in Southeast Asia poses a threat unacceptable at that time to the position of the United States, both in the Far East and world-wide, and

b. That the United Kingdom and/or France decline to support action against the nation of Communist China, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, from the military point of view, strongly recommend the inclusion in any National Security Council policy statement with respect to Southeast Asia stipulation that the United States Government will consider taking military action, unilaterally, if necessary, against the nation of Communist China.

16. Acceptance of the policies proposed in NSC 124 would serve to increase the commitments of the United States. The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that such increase should be accompanied by a substantial upward revision of our economic and military assistance programs for Southeast Asia and for Formosa and by some (possibly substantial) increase in our forces in being. In this connection, current slippages in the military production programs have already reduced planned United States and allied military readiness. There should be no increase in the risk resulting from such shortages in military production. Accordingly, the increases in our assistance programs and our ready forces, required by acceptance of the proposed policies, would call for a substantial

and immediate increase in the scale of United States production, and pending that increase, would reduce the military assistance programs to other nations, especially those in high priority.

17. The Joint Chiefs of Staff concur in paragraph 67 of the study in the Annex to NSC 124, which is quoted below for ready reference:

"In order to pursue the military courses of action envisaged in this paper to a definite favorable conclusion within a reasonable period, it will be necessary to divert military strength from other areas thus reducing our military capabilities in those areas, with the recognized increased risks involved therein, or to increase our military forces in being, or both. The magnitude of the United States military requirements to carry out these courses of action and the manner in which they could best be met can be determined only after study by the Joint Chiefs of Staff."

Such determination will follow completion of the military studies called for in subparagraph 6c(3) of the draft policy statement in NSC 124 dealing with the military measures called for in subparagraphs 6d, 7f, 8c, 9b, and 10c thereof. In this connection, an armistice in Korea will not of itself permit major redeployment or redistribution of ground forces in the Far East in the near future except at the risk of losing Korea and endangering Japan in the event hostilities in that area are resumed.

18. In connection with the foregoing, the Joint Chiefs of Staff contemplate no employment of United States ground force units in French Indochina, Thailand, or Burma; rather the Joint Chiefs of Staff anticipate that the major increase in United States forces required for contemplated operations against aggression in that area would be naval and air force units. It should be noted that the creation of any new units would, in general, strengthen the United States military position for the eventuality of global war and that such forces would be capable of rapid redeployment in that eventuality.

19. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, from the United States military point of view, do not wish to join in a combined military command at this time or under present circumstances for the defense of Southeast Asia against Chinese Communist aggression. In this connection, the Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that the United States should not at this time contemplate relieving the French of their responsibility in Indochina if present United States global strategy, includ-



ing France's role therein, is to be continued. Further, they feel that, while French Indochina, Thailand, and/or Burma are being defended by other friendly nations, the role of the United States in support of such defense should be primarily military action against Communist China itself. This latter action should, of course, involve military support from the British and French as well as from other friendly nations, but should remain under the control of the United States.

20. It will be noted that the foregoing comments are in general limited to United States courses of action relative to Indochina, Thailand, and Burma. The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider it premature for the National Security Council to attempt to decide now as to the military courses of action which would be taken with respect to Malaya, Indonesia, or in the Southwest Pacific in the event the integrity of any of these is directly threatened by foreign aggression which could only follow aggression in Indochina and/or Burma. Accordingly, in the event that the Chinese Communists threaten Malaya or Indonesia, the United States should then, in the light of the world situation generally and the situation in the Far East specifically at that time, consider the military measures it might take as a part of a United Nations collective action or in conjunction with the United Kingdom and any other friendly governments.

21. In the light of all the foregoing, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that the National Security Council consider:

a. Whether the United States, unilaterally, if necessary, would be willing to extend the war to the forces and territory of Communist China in event of Communist Chinese military aggression in Southeast Asia;

b. Whether the United States should insist that French Indochina, Thailand, and/or Burma be defended by other friendly nations and that the role of the United States in support of such defense be primarily military action against Communist China itself; and

c. Failing freedom of action against Communist China itself, United States policy should limit United States military operations to those necessary to cover and assist possible forced evacuation of the French and/or the British from their positions.

22. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have a number of substantive and specific comments with respect to the statements of policy

in NSC 124. These comments are contained in the Enclosure attached. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that the Enclosure and their views herein be furnished to the National Security Council prior to its action on this paper. The military studies referred to in the Annex to NSC 124 and in paragraph 17 of this memorandum will be furnished in due course to the Representative of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the National Security Council Staff, if such action is indicated following National Security Council action.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

HOYT S. VANDENBERG,  
Chief of Staff, United States Air Force.

Enclosure

E N C L O S U R E

D R A F T

MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL SENIOR STAFF

Subject: United States Objectives and Courses of Action  
with Respect to Communist Aggression in Southeast  
Asia.

1. The following specific comments by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on NSC 124 are submitted in order that these may be reflected as appropriate in the revision of that document.

2. Change subparagraph 2 c to read (changes indicated in the usual manner):

"Communist control of all of Southeast Asia would render the U.S. position in the Pacific offshore island chain precarious would seriously jeopardize fundamental U.S. security interests in the Far East."

REASON: In the interests of conciseness and accuracy. In the light of the discussion in the analysis, the original wording overstates the immediate military threat to the U.S. position in the Pacific offshore island chain in the event of the fall of Southeast Asia.

3. Revise the present last sentence of subparagraph 5 d in such a manner as to refer to every paragraph in the paper (in addition to subparagraphs 6 a, 7 f, and 8 c) which involves military measures against Communist China.

4. Add the following sentence at the end of subparagraph 5 d:



"In this connection, it should be made clear to the other nations that United States ground forces will not be committed to the defense of French Indochina, Thailand, or Burma."

REASON: For consistency and accuracy and in order to preclude misunderstanding.

5. Change subparagraph 5 h to read as follows (changes indicated in the usual manner):

"Take ~~whatever~~ such measures other than military as may be practicable to promote the coordinated defense of the area, and encourage and support the spirit of resistance among the peoples of Southeast Asia to Chinese Communist aggression and to the encroachments of local communists."

REASON: For preciseness and to preclude any implication that the United States will join in a combined military command for the defense of the area.

6. Change subparagraph 6 c (3) to read as follows (changes indicated in the usual manner):

"In view of the immediate urgency of the situation, involving possible large-scale Chinese Communist intervention, and in order that the United States may be prepared to take whatever action may be appropriate in such circumstances, ~~make-the-plan~~ determine now the measures necessary to carry out the courses of action indicated in subparagraph d below."

REASON: This subparagraph as presently written directs the Department of Defense and other agencies to engage in certain formal planning which, in the case of the Department of Defense, would involve the formulation of specific war plans. In addition, formal military planning would have to be initiated with the French, with the British, with the Chinese Nationalist Government, with the Government of Burma, and possibly with other friendly governments, including States Members of the United Nations. The Joint Chiefs of Staff question the feasibility and desirability of such action and, in any event, from the military point of view, they would find it impracticable to formulate war plans for all of the contingencies suggested in the basic paper beyond United States military courses of action and force bases therefor. On the other hand, the Joint Chiefs of Staff support the desirability of undertaking unilaterally appropriate studies of the problem involved.

7. Change subparagraph 6 c (4) to read as follows (changes indicated in the usual manner):

~~"In the event that information and circumstances point to the conclusion that France is no longer prepared to carry the burden in Indochina, or if France presses for a sharing of the responsibility for Indochina, whether in the UN or directly with the U.S. Government, Oppose a French withdrawal and consult with the French and British concerning further measures to be taken to safeguard the area from communist domination. from Indochina."~~

REASON: The United States should not at this time contemplate relieving the French of their responsibility in Indochina if present United States global strategy, including France's role therein, is to be continued. There would, however, be no objection to a discussion of this contingency appearing in the Analysis to the basic paper.

8. Change subparagraph 6 d (3) to read as follows (changes indicated in the usual manner):

"Consistent with world-wide U.S. commitments take appropriate military action against the forces and territory of Communist China as part of a UN collective action or in conjunction with French and the United Kingdom and any other friendly governments."

REASON: To emphasize that any military action against Communist China must be without geographic limitations.

9. Insert the following new subparagraph immediately following subparagraphs 6 d, 7 f, and 8 c and any others referring to possible military measures against Communist China, renumbering subsequent paragraphs accordingly:

"In the event that the United States, in the face of Chinese Communist aggression into Southeast Asia, overt or volunteer, deems it advisable to take military action against Communist China itself, and if the United Kingdom and/or France refuse to support such action, the United States will consider in the light of



the world situation at the time, and in the light of the possible consequences upon the role of the United Kingdom and France in United States world strategy, whether United States security interests require taking such military action unilaterally."

REASON: In the opinion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff this reservation is vital to the security of the United States.

10. Change the first sentence of subparagraph 7 b to read as follows (changes indicated in the usual manner):

"Arrange to conduct a full and frank exchange of views with the British Government with the object of re-examining policy toward Burma and seeking any joint or coordinated action other than military which might contribute toward an improvement in the situation in Burma."

REASON: For preciseness and to preclude any implication that the United States will join in a combined military command for the defense of the area.

11. Change the first sentence of subparagraph 7 d to read as follows (changes indicated in the usual manner):

"Encourage the British to develop united action and cooperation among indigenous, anticommunist groups in Burma to resist communist encroachments."

REASON: Burma is an area of British responsibility.

12. Change subparagraph 7 f (2) to read as follows (changes indicated in the usual manner):

"Consistent with world-wide U.S. commitments take appropriate military action against the forces and territory of Communist China as part of a UN collective action or in conjunction with France and the United Kingdom and any other friendly governments."

REASON: To emphasize any military action against Communist China must be without geographic limitations.

13. Change subparagraph 8 b (2) as follows (changes indicated in the usual manner):

"Immediately put into effect whatever measures other than military may be determined as feasible to forestall an invasion of Thailand or a seizure of power by local Thai communists."

REASON: Military operations by the United States in Thailand would, in all probability, be infeasible in the premises.

14. Change subparagraph 8 c (2) to read as follows (changes indicated in the usual manner):

"Consistent with world-wide U.S. commitments take appropriate military action against the forces and territory of Communist China as part of a UN collective action or in conjunction with France and the United Kingdom and any other friendly governments."

REASON: To emphasize that any military action against Communist China must be without geographic limitations.

15. Change subparagraph 9 b as follows:

a. Revise the second clause of subparagraph 9 b to clarify the statement "in addition to the appropriate military action contemplated above against Communist China."

b. Change the third and fourth clauses of subparagraph 9 b to read as follows (changes indicated in the usual manner):

"the United States should, assist in the light of the world situation generally, and the situation in the Far East specifically, consider the military measures it might take for the defense of Malaya as-appropriate; as part of a UN collective action or in conjunction with the United Kingdom and any other friendly governments."

REASON: Although the world situation generally and the situation in the Far East specifically will be controlling, it may be possible for the United States to provide those reinforcements which are essential for a successful defense of Malaya at the Isthmus of Kra, thus insuring the retention by the British of Singapore while concurrently decreasing the danger of a successful communist invasion of Indonesia.

16. Clarify subparagraph 10 b to indicate action the United States would take in the event of attempted seizure of power by internal communist action in Indonesia.



17. Delete subparagraph 10 c and substitute the following therefor:

"In the event of the imminent or actual fall of Malaya to communism, consider in the light of circumstances existing at the time, what if any measures, including military, the United States in its own self-interest should undertake to prevent the fall in Indonesia to communism."

REASON: It would be neither sound nor realistic for the National Security Council to attempt to determine now the course of action which would be undertaken in Indonesia and in the Southwest Pacific if Malaya should fall to the enemy; rather, the course of events globally and in Southeast Asia must be re-examined at that time in order to arrive at any valid decision.

18. Revise the paper where applicable to reflect the latest intelligence estimates.

5 March 1952

ITEM 5 (FOR CONSIDERATION)

UNITED STATES OBJECTIVES AND COURSES OF ACTION WITH  
RESPECT TO COMMUNIST AGGRESSION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA (NSC 124)

SUMMARY

A summary of our present policy and of the proposed policy contained in NSC 124 is annexed, (Tab A).

COMMENTS OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have submitted eight pages of comments, including an Annex, which have been circulated to the Council. The primary points made by the JCS are:

1. NSC 124 involves the making of a single, basic decision, which is political in its nature, i.e., whether or not the United States would be willing to take military action which would in effect constitute war against Communist-China to prevent Southeast Asia from passing into the Communist orbit. They propose in effect that the NSC affirm this willingness in order to provide the basis for determining the cost of the courses of action in terms of men, money, material, impact on the U.S. economy and upon U.S. military assistance programs.

2. The JCS report that their preliminary discussions with the Chiefs of Staff of the UK and France indicate that both are opposed to the concept of action against Communist-China other than that limited to the area of or approaches to the land battle in opposition to the aggressor forces.

3. The JCS believe that such limitations of the military action would result in the action being defensive in character and at best indecisive and indefinite in duration. They recommend solely from the point of view of military operations that in order to offer a chance of success military operations in defense against Chinese-Communist invasion of French Indochina, Thailand, and/or Burma must be accompanied by military action against the sources of that aggression, namely, Communist-China itself. The JCS concede that this course of action might result in a long war and an expensive one, at least materiel-wise.

4. The JCS therefore insist that the U.S. must be accorded freedom of action and if possible support in the undertaking of appropriate military action to include action against Communist-China itself. Failing such freedom of action, the U.S. should accept the possibility of the loss of mainland Southeast Asia. The JCS oppose the use of U.S. ground forces in SEA and oppose joining a combined military command of the defense of those countries, *at the time of the present Communist threat.*



5. The JCS strongly recommend the addition of a stipulation that the U.S. will consider taking military action unilaterally if necessary against Communist-China.

6.. Approval of the policies would require a substantial upward revision of our economic and military assistance programs for SEA and Formosa, some (possibly substantial) increase in our forces in being -- primarily, Naval and Air force units --, and a substantial and immediate increase in the scale of U.S. production.

7. Further military studies relating to the magnitude of military requirements to carry out these courses of action and the manner in which they could best be met will be furnished in due course to the NSC.

#### COMMENTS OF THE JOINT SECRETARIES

The Joint Secretaries have not yet submitted any written comments.

#### INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES

A CIA Special Estimate (SE22) (Tab B), and HIR 35/1, "Probable Developments in Indochina in 1952", (Tab C), relate to NSC 124.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That you discourage the making of any policy decisions by the NSC at this meeting.

This matter was put on the agenda of this meeting so that the President could discuss it with the Council before leaving on his vacation. He understands that the matter has not progressed far enough for final decision. There has not been sufficient time for anyone fully to consider the comments of the JCS. The JCS themselves need further time to complete their studies of the military requirements involved and the impact of fulfilling these requirements on other programs and on our global strategy.

2. That the paper be referred back to the Senior Staff for revision in the light of the Council's discussion and the additional information which will be brought to bear on the problem.

The Senior Staff would, of course, take into account the general and specific comments of the JCS together with the further military studies which the JCS will submit to them.

3. That you advise the Council that in your opinion the basic decision involved in this paper should not be taken until the military implications have been fully explored; that you are requesting the JCS to proceed immediately with studies of the nature referred to in their memorandum, with a view to providing the fullest possible information to the NSC -- this on the planning assumption that the decision will be



taken and that the British and French will support the action.

It would seem inappropriate to make a decision as to our willingness to go to war without having fully explored the military implications. It would appear desirable for you to take the position that the Defense Department is not prepared to make such a recommendation to the President until it is satisfied that the military implications are acceptable and it had full opportunity to explain its findings and conclusions to the Council and the President.

4. That you raise the question whether, in view of the crucial importance of reaching agreement with the French and British, the Council should contemplate reaching a firm national policy decision before such negotiations are undertaken.

In view of the great complexities of the problem involved and the heavy reliance we necessarily must place on our allies in regard to SEA, it would be perhaps more sensible to postpone a final Government decision on SEA policy until after further exploratory talks with the British and French -- either on the Governmental or the political-military level.

5. That you indicate that in your view it is unnecessary and unwise for us to contemplate unilateral action against Communist-China under present circumstances; and in view of the possibility of leaks, etc., you would prefer that no reference be made to this possibility in the present NSC policy paper. You might point out that as far as overt aggression is concerned, our main objective is to deter it by a joint warning. We should not engage in a bluff. The primary need is, therefore, to reach sufficient agreement with the U.K. and France as to courses of action to permit the issuance of such a warning.

6. That you express the view that the present paper concentrates far too heavily on action to be taken against aggression; that by far the greater danger is that Southeast Asia will fall to subversive tactics; that in the absence of overt aggression it is probable that before long France will be unable or unwilling to continue to carry the burdens of the civil war; that the paper proposes no courses of action to meet these contingencies which are commensurate with the burdens and risks which it proposes we assume to deal with the lesser risk of aggression; and that you propose that this deficiency in the paper be remedied by the Senior Staff in their next draft.

This is a major deficiency in the proposed policy. If nothing is to be done beyond what is now being done to prevent Communist subversion in this area, there is grave doubt as to the wisdom of assuming

very grave risks of general war in an attempt to save the area from further overt aggression.

Most of the actions available to deal with the danger of subversion lie in the political and economic fields. One means of reducing this danger and of improving the situation would involve a greater degree of U.S. supervision over the use of U.S. military assistance in Indochina, particularly with respect to the development of the native army.



SUMMARY OF PRESENT POLICY AND  
PROPOSED POLICY CONTAINED IN  
NSC 124

Present Policy

Our present policy in the Far East, as set forth in NSC 48/5, draws the line which the United States will go to war to defend along the offshore island chain, namely, Japan, the Ryukus, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand, with special treatment of Formosa. With respect to Southeast Asia, the substance of our policy is to continue our present support programs to strengthen the will and ability to resist Communist encroachment and render Communist military operations as costly as possible, and thus to gain time for the United States and its allies to build up the defense of the offshore island chain. With respect to the fighting already going on in Indochina, the policy is to give military supplies to the French Union forces on a high priority basis but to avoid relieving the French authorities of their basic military responsibilities, and to avoid committing United States armed forces under any circumstances.

The present policy does not appear to result from a lack of awareness of the great importance of the Southeast Asian nations, both strategically and in terms of their raw material resources, but on a recognition of the difficulties involved in holding the area. The States of those areas are inherently weak and there are formidable difficulties involved in building up the will of the peoples in the area to resist Communist encroachment. One of the greatest of these difficulties is the inability of the French to enlist the support of the Indochinese or of neighboring States in support of their fight against Communism due to the feeling against French colonial rule. In the face of these difficulties, the world-wide commitments of the United States and the obvious military difficulties of utilizing United States forces in an effective defense of Burma, Thailand and Indochina, it has been the Government's position that it could not undertake to commit United States forces to defend the area against aggression even though it is of great importance.

Proposed Policy

The policy paper under consideration proposes several major changes. It proposes:

A. That in case of overt aggression of Communist-China against Burma, Thailand or Indochina, the United States take appropriate military action against Communist-China consistent with our world-wide commitments provided the United Nations will act or the British and French will join.

B. That in an attempt to deter China from such overt action, we issue a joint warning with a number of other States that we shall take military action in such an event, provided that at least the British and French will agree to such a joint warning and to the general plan of action in case the warning is ignored.



C. That in case of overt aggression, Chinese Nationalist forces would be employed as desirable and feasible in military operations in Southeast Asia, Korea, or China proper.

D. The proposed policy with reference to the Malay States and Indonesia is that appropriate military action should be taken to defend them, thereby in effect placing them within the offshore island defense chain. It is contemplated that in case the three mainland States fall, the British ground forces in Malaya, combined with British and United States naval and air power, could defend these areas.

E. With respect to the threat of Communist subversion of the Southeast Asian States, the paper contemplated minor changes, such as

- a. Strengthen psychological activities
- b. Encourage trade and cooperation with Western countries
- c. Strengthen covert operations
- d. Promote the co-ordinated defense of the area.

No increase is contemplated in our economic and technical assistance programs, or military aid programs. Minor recognition is given to the danger that France may not be willing much longer to carry the burden in Indochina, but the paper provides only for consultation with the French and British and opposition to French withdrawal in this event. A major strengthening of our policy in Indonesia is contemplated by a provision that in case of seizure or attempted seizure of power by internal Communist action, we would take appropriate military action consistent with our world-wide commitments to prevent Communist control of the area.

PAGES  
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE SECRETARY

June 17, 1952

Following his telephone conversation with Sir Oliver Franks today, which is reported separately, the Secretary saw General Bradley and Mr. Perkins. Later Sir Oliver dropped in at the office following a meeting in Mr. Jessup's office. He asked if he could see the Secretary for a few minutes to get the further report on the matter of talks on Southeast Asia. He repeated what he told us earlier that he had had a second message from London following the report which the Embassy had sent of Mr. Perkins' conversation with Mr. Steele.

The Secretary said that he had talked about this matter with General Bradley this afternoon and that Friday was the only day which General Bradley could possibly meet and that was very inconvenient for Mr. Acheson. He said, therefore, he thought that any talks were impossible to arrange. He then said that he would be glad to talk to Sir Oliver right at that moment and see where we stood.

The Secretary reviewed the situation and the talks which took place in Paris. He said that in the earlier meetings which had taken place on Southeast Asia, everyone had started from a different point and there had been little in the way of conclusion reached. He said that he felt what was needed now was political decisions.

The Secretary then analyzed the situation as we saw it. He said that if the Chinese came into Indochina in force, we would have to do something. We could not remain passive. He said that none of the things we could do were very pleasant ones and we felt that a warning was highly desirable. He said that we felt we should not give a warning, however, if there had been no agreement on what we did in the event the Communists moved in anyway. He said this would make us look very silly and would weaken the effect of any other warnings.



He said it was clear that it was futile and a mistake to defend Indochina in Indochina. He said we could not have another Korea. He said it was also true we could not put ground forces in Indochina. We do not have them and we could not afford to immobilize such forces as we had. He said we could take air and naval action, however, and had discussed whether this should be confined to approaches.

He concluded that our only hope was of changing the Chinese mind. He said that we could strike where it hurts China or we could set up a blockade against trade. He said we had concluded that our mission would not be to destroy the Communist regime. He also said that we fully realized the danger of bringing the USSR into the show.

The Secretary concluded that there was no point in getting our military people into any talks. He said we must get political decisions first. He said that if firm decisions could not be reached that we perhaps could reach tentative decisions. He said that it had been clear at Paris that he was somewhat "ahead of the play" while the French and the British had urged us to discuss these matters and had wanted discussions before decisions were made. When the question actually came up, they were not ready to talk.

The Secretary remarked that Mr. Letourneau had said in Paris that the military talks had reached some decision as to how to evacuate the wounded, etc., in the event of difficulties. He said that our Navy had talked to Mr. Letourneau regarding port sizes, capacity of ships, etc., with regard to evacuation.

Sir Oliver said he thought he understood the point, would report back to London and would let us know if there were anything further on it.

Mr. Acheson said that if his analysis were wrong and the British Chiefs of Staff had any different one, he would be glad to hear of it.

S LDBattle

Outgoing Telegram

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

N

TO: Amembassy PARIS 7404

June 17, 1952  
6 45 p.m.

In course Letourneau talks today, US side informed FR that subject appropriations US WLD be prepared provide up to 150 MIL DOLS ADDL FY 1953 aid in support overall FR effort in IC, which probably will remain, as stated in Letourneau memo (EMBTEL 7682 June 9), substantially same next year. It might be considered this ADDL aid WLD in effect add to FR resources to meet increased overall FR requirements in EUR in 1953. Relation this ADDL aid to overall US aid to FR in FY 1953 and total FR defense effort in calendar 1953 will be determined in course NATO annual review.

FR informed that in view Lisbon understanding, no ADDL aid available for FR calendar 1953 budget for IC, but that we are considering Pleven request for ADDL OSP in 1952.

Copies US position paper and minutes being pouched marked Sprouse. Text communique FOLS in separate TEL.

ACHESON



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FOR THE PRESS

JUNE 18, 1952

NO. 473

Secretary Acheson made the following statement at his news conference today:

VISIT OF M. JEAN LETOURNEAU

As you are aware, M. Jean Letourneau, Minister of the Associated States for the French Government, has been spending the last few days in Washington exchanging views with representatives of various agencies of this Government. The Ambassadors of Cambodia and Vietnam have also participated in conversations with M. Letourneau and with our own representatives.

A communique covering the substance of the talks will be issued later today and I will therefore not go into details now. Yet I would like to share with you the feeling of encouragement and confidence which M. Letourneau inspires. His thorough grasp of the situation and his constructive approach to the problems involved - military, political and economic - have impressed us all.

As you know, the Communist aggression in Indochina has been going on for six years. It has been greatly stepped up because of assistance received from Communist China during the past two years. Yet, under French leadership, the threat to this part of the free world has been met with great courage and admirable resourcefulness. The military situation appears to be developing favorably. It has been good to hear from M. Letourneau of the part played in achieving this result by the considerable quantities of American arms and material which the magnificent fighting qualities of the French Union forces, including those of the Associated States, have justified us in devoting to this area of the struggle against Communist aggression. The effort to make of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia secure and prosperous members of the free world community has made great progress.

I have been particularly impressed by what M. Letourneau has told me of what is being done to enable the people of the three Associated States to play the constantly greater role in their own defense to which they rightly aspire. Much has been accomplished toward the creation, training and equipping of the national armies. Units of these armies have distinguished themselves



in battle and are performing vital security functions in many parts of the country. They look forward with confidence and determination to assuming an increasing share of the burden of carrying on the struggle. Their effectiveness full justifies the program of expansion to which the governments concerned are committed and underlines, I believe, the soundness of our own decision, subject of course to the availability of Congressional appropriations, to render increasing assistance in building these armies. M. Letourneau described these programs in the course of his address before the Overseas Writers yesterday.

Favorable developments have not been confined to the fighting fronts and to the national armies. There are increasing evidences of the growing vitality of the Associated States in handling their political, financial and economic affairs. M. Letourneau's account of the manner in which these new member States of the French Union are envisaging and meeting their responsibilities was heartening. I do not think it is generally realized to what extent these new states in fact control their own affairs. Only a limited number of services related to the necessities of the war remain temporarily in French hands.

We in the United States are aware of the vital importance of the struggle in Indochina to the cause of the free world. We have earmarked for Indochina economic and materiel aid to a considerable amount during the past two years. We are doing our best to activate deliveries: as you are aware the 150th ship bearing American arms and munitions to Indochina arrived in Saigon within the last few weeks. We are now bearing a considerable portion of the total burden of the war in Indochina expressed in financial terms, although of course the entire combat burden is being carried by the French Union and the Associated States with the latter assuming a constantly increasing share.

The Communists have made a most determined effort in Indochina. Their aggression has been checked and recent indications warrant the view that the tide is now moving in our favor. Once again the policy of meeting aggression with force is paying off and we can I believe be confident that as we carry out the plans upon which we have agreed we can anticipate continued favorable developments in the maintenance and consolidation of the free world bulwark in Indochina.

June 25, 1952

NOTE BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

to the

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

on

UNITED STATES OBJECTIVES AND COURSES  
OF ACTION WITH RESPECT TO SOUTHEAST ASIA

- References:
- A. NSC 124/1
  - B. NSC 124 and Annex to NSC 124
  - C. NSC Action Nos. 597, 614 and 655
  - D. Memos for NSC from Executive Secretary, same subject, dated June 24 and June 25, 1952
  - E. Memos for NSC from Executive Secretary, subject, "United States Objectives and Courses of Action With Respect to Communist Aggression in Southeast Asia," dated March 4, April 15, April 30 and May 21, 1952
  - F. NSC 48/5
  - G. NSC 64
  - H. SE-22 and SE-27

At the 120th Council meeting with the President presiding, the National Security Council and the Acting Secretary of the Treasury adopted NSC 124/1, subject to changes in paragraphs 2-a, 3, 5, 10-c-(2), 10-c-(3), 11-(1), 11-(3), and 12 thereof, as incorporated in the enclosure (NSC Action No. 655).

In adopting NSC 124/1, as amended, the Council and the Acting Secretary of the Treasury noted the following statement by the Acting Secretary of Defense with respect to the views of the Joint Secretaries regarding NSC 124/1:

"In our opinion, if this policy is to be truly effective, it must be clearly recognized that the U. S. policy 'to make it possible for the French to reduce the degree of their participation in the military, economic and political affairs of the Associated States' (par. 8-d) must be emphasized and reemphasized to the French at each and every political, economic or military negotiation which the U. S. Government enters into with the Government of France, especially those



negotiations which deal with the providing of U. S. economic or military aid to France or to Indochina."

The report, as amended and adopted, was subsequently submitted to the President for consideration. The President has this date approved NSC 124/1, as amended and enclosed herewith, and directs its implementation by all appropriate executive departments and agencies of the U. S. Government under the coordination of the Secretaries of State and Defense.

Accordingly, NSC 64 and paragraph 14 of NSC 48/5 are superseded by the enclosed report. The enclosure does not supersede, but supplements the statement of the current objective with respect to Southeast Asia contained in paragraph 6-g of NSC 48/5.

It is requested that special security precautions be observed in the handling of the enclosure, and that access to it be restricted on a need-to-know basis.

JAMES S. LAY, Jr.  
Executive Secretary

cc: The Secretary of the Treasury  
The Acting Director of Defense Mobilization



STATEMENT OF POLICY  
by the  
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

on

UNITED STATES OBJECTIVES AND COURSES OF ACTION WITH RESPECT  
TO SOUTHEAST ASIA\*

OBJECTIVE

1. To prevent the countries of Southeast Asia from passing into the communist orbit, and to assist them to develop the will and ability to resist communism from within and without and to contribute to the strengthening of the free world.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

2. Communist domination, by whatever means, of all Southeast Asia would seriously endanger in the short term, and critically endanger in the longer term, United States security interests.

a. The loss of any of the countries of Southeast Asia to communist control as a consequence of overt or covert Chinese Communist aggression would have critical psychological, political and economic consequences. In the absence of effective and timely counteraction, the loss of any single country would probably lead to relatively swift submission to or an alignment with communism by the remaining countries of this group.

Furthermore, an alignment with communism of the rest of

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\*Southeast Asia is used herein to mean the area embracing Burma, Thailand, Indochina, Malaya and Indonesia.

Southeast Asia and India, and in the longer term, of the Middle East (with the probable exceptions of at least Pakistan and Turkey) would in all probability progressively follow. Such widespread alignment would endanger the stability and security of Europe.

b. Communist control of all of Southeast Asia would render the U. S. position in the Pacific offshore island chain precarious and would seriously jeopardize fundamental U. S. security interests in the Far East.

c. Southeast Asia, especially Malaya and Indonesia, is the principal world source of natural rubber and tin, and a producer of petroleum and other strategically important commodities. The rice exports of Burma and Thailand are critically important to Malaya, Ceylon and Hong Kong and are of considerable significance to Japan and India, all important areas of free Asia.

d. The loss of Southeast Asia, especially of Malaya and Indonesia, could result in such economic and political pressures in Japan as to make it extremely difficult to prevent Japan's eventual accommodation to communism.

3. It is therefore imperative that an overt attack on Southeast Asia by the Chinese Communists be vigorously opposed. In order to pursue the military courses of action envisaged in this paper to a favorable conclusion within a reasonable period, it will be necessary to divert military strength from

other areas thus reducing our military capability in those areas, with the recognized increased risks involved therein, or to increase our military forces in being, or both.

4. The danger of an overt military attack against Southeast Asia is inherent in the existence of a hostile and aggressive Communist China, but such an attack is less probable than continued communist efforts to achieve domination through subversion. The primary threat to Southeast Asia accordingly arises from the possibility that the situation in Indochina may deteriorate as a result of the weakening of the resolve of, or as a result of the inability of the governments of France and of the Associated States to continue to oppose the Viet Minh rebellion, the military strength of which is being steadily increased by virtue of aid furnished by the Chinese Communist regime and its allies.

5. The successful defense of Tonkin is critical to the retention in non-Communist hands of mainland Southeast Asia. However, should Burma come under communist domination, a communist military advance through Thailand might make Indochina, including Tonkin, militarily indefensible. The execution of the following U. S. courses of action with respect to individual countries of the area may vary depending upon the route of communist advance into Southeast Asia.

6. Actions designed to achieve our objectives in Southeast Asia require sensitive selection and application, on the



one hand to assure the optimum efficiency through coordination of measures for the general area, and on the other, to accommodate to the greatest practicable extent to the individual sensibilities of the several governments, social classes and minorities of the area.

## COURSES OF ACTION

### Southeast Asia

7. With respect to Southeast Asia, the United States should:

a. Strengthen propaganda and cultural activities, as appropriate, in relation to the area to foster increased alignment of the people with the free world.

b. Continue, as appropriate, programs of economic and technical assistance designed to strengthen the indigenous non-communist governments of the area.

c. Encourage the countries of Southeast Asia to restore and expand their commerce with each other and with the rest of the free world, and stimulate the flow of the raw material resources of the area to the free world.

d. Seek agreement with other nations, including at least France, the UK, Australia and New Zealand, for a joint warning to Communist China regarding the grave consequences of Chinese aggression against Southeast Asia, the issuance of such a warning to be contingent upon the prior agreement of France and the UK to participate in the courses of action set forth in paragraphs 10 c, 12, 14 f (1) and (2), and 15 e (1) and (2), and such others as are determined as a result of prior trilateral consultation, in the event such a warning is ignored.

e. Seek UK and French agreement in principle that a naval blockade of Communist China should be included in the minimum courses of action set forth in paragraph 10c below.

f. Continue to encourage and support closer co-operation among the countries of Southeast Asia, and between those countries and the United States, Great Britain, France, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, South Asia and Japan.

g. Strengthen, as appropriate, covert operations designed to assist in the achievement of U. S. objectives in Southeast Asia.

h. Continue activities and operations designed to encourage the overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia to organize and activate anti-communist groups and activities within their own communities, to resist the effects of parallel pro-communist groups and activities and, generally, to increase their orientation toward the free world.

i. Take measures to promote the coordinated defense of the area, and encourage and support the spirit of resistance among the peoples of Southeast Asia to Chinese Communist aggression and to the encroachments of local communists.

j. Make clear to the American people the importance of Southeast Asia to the security of the United States so that they may be prepared for any of the courses of action proposed herein.



## Indochina

8. With respect to Indochina the United States should:

a. Continue to promote international support for the three Associated States.

b. Continue to assure the French that the U.S. regards the French effort in Indochina as one of great strategic importance in the general international interest rather than in the purely French interest, and as essential to the security of the free world, not only in the Far East but in the Middle East and Europe as well.

c. Continue to assure the French that we are cognizant of the sacrifices entailed for France in carrying out her effort in Indochina and that, without overlooking the principle that France has the primary responsibility in Indochina, we will recommend to the Congress appropriate military, economic and financial aid to France and the Associated States.

d. Continue to cultivate friendly and increasingly cooperative relations with the Governments of France and the Associated States at all levels with a view to maintaining and, if possible, increasing the degree of influence the U.S. can bring to bear on the policies and actions of the French and Indochinese authorities to the end of directing the course of events toward the objectives we seek. Our influence with the French and Associated

States should be designed to further those constructive political, economic and social measures which will tend to increase the stability of the Associated States and thus make it possible for the French to reduce the degree of their participation in the military, economic and political affairs of the Associated States.

e. Specifically we should use our influence with France and the Associated States to promote positive political, military, economic and social policies, among which the following are considered essential elements:

(1) Continued recognition and carrying out by France of its primary responsibility for the defense of Indochina.

(2) Further steps by France and the Associated States toward the evolutionary development of the Associated States.

(3) Such reorganization of French administration and representation in Indochina as will be conducive to an increased feeling of responsibility on the part of the Associated States.

(4) Intensive efforts to develop the armies of the Associated States, including independent logistical and administrative services.

(5) The development of more effective and stable Governments in the Associated States.

(6) Land reform, agrarian and industrial credit, ✓  
sound rice marketing systems, labor development,  
foreign trade and capital formation.

(7) An aggressive military, political, and ✓  
psychological program to defeat or seriously reduce  
the Viet Minh forces.

(8) US-French cooperation in publicizing pro-  
gressive developments in the foregoing policies in  
Indochina.

9. In the absence of large scale Chinese Communist inter-  
vention in Indochina, the United States should:

a. Provide increased aid on a high priority basis  
for the French Union forces without relieving French  
authorities of their basic military responsibility for  
the defense of the Associated States in order to:

(1) Assist in developing indigenous armed forces  
which will eventually be capable of maintaining in-  
ternal security without assistance from French units.

(2) Assist the French Union forces to maintain  
progress in the restoration of internal security  
against the Viet Minh.

(3) Assist the forces of France and the Associa-  
ted States to defend Indochina against Chinese Com-  
munist aggression.

b. In view of the immediate urgency of the situation,



involving possible large-scale Chinese Communist intervention, and in order that the United States may be prepared to take whatever action may be appropriate in such circumstances, make the plans necessary to carry out the courses of action indicated in paragraph 10 below.

*new*  
*10*  
c. In the event that information and circumstances point to the conclusion that France is no longer prepared to carry the burden in Indochina, or if France presses for an increased sharing of the responsibility for Indochina, whether in the UN or directly with the U. S. Government, oppose a French withdrawal and consult with the French and British concerning further measures to be taken to safeguard the area from communist domination.

10. In the event that it is determined, in consultation with France, that Chinese Communist forces (including volunteers) have overtly intervened in the conflict in Indochina, or are covertly participating to such an extent as to jeopardize retention of the Tonkin Delta area by French Union forces, the United States should take the following measures to assist these forces in preventing the loss of Indochina, to repel the aggression and to restore peace and security in Indochina:

a. Support a request by France or the Associated States for immediate action by the United Nations which would include a UN resolution declaring that Communist China has committed an aggression, recommending that

member states take whatever action may be necessary, without geographic limitation, to assist France and the Associated States in meeting the aggression.

b. Whether or not UN action is immediately forthcoming, seek the maximum possible international support for, and participation in, the minimum courses of military action agreed upon by the parties to the joint warning. These minimum courses of action are set forth in subparagraph c immediately below.

c. Carry out the following minimum courses of military action, either under the auspices of the UN or in conjunction with France and the United Kingdom and any other friendly governments:

(1) A resolute defense of Indochina itself to which the United States would provide such air and naval assistance as might be practicable.

(2) Interdiction of Chinese Communist communication lines including those in China.

(3) The United States would expect to provide the major forces for task (2) above; but would expect the UK and France to provide at least token forces therefor and to render such other assistance as is normal between allies, and France to carry the burden of providing, in conjunction with the Associated States, the ground forces for the defense of Indochina.

11. In addition to the courses of action set forth in paragraph 10 above, the United States should take the following military actions as appropriate to the situation:

a. If agreement is reached pursuant to paragraph 7-e, establishment in conjunction with the UK and France of a naval blockade of Communist China.

b. Intensification of covert operations to aid anti-communist guerrilla forces operating against Communist China and to interfere with and disrupt Chinese Communist lines of communication and military supply areas.

c. Utilization, as desirable and feasible, of anti-communist Chinese forces, including Chinese Nationalist forces in military operations in Southeast Asia, Korea, or China proper.

d. Assistance to the British to cover an evacuation from Hong Kong, if required.

e. Evacuation of French Union civil and military personnel from the Tonkin delta, if required.

12. If, subsequent to aggression against Indochina and execution of the minimum necessary courses of action listed in paragraph 10-c above, the United States determines jointly with the UK and France that expanded military action against Communist China is rendered necessary by the situation,



the United States should take air and naval action in conjunction with at least France and the U.K. against all suitable military targets in China, avoiding insofar as practicable those targets in areas near the boundaries of the USSR in order not to increase the risk of direct Soviet involvement.

13. In the event the concurrence of the United Kingdom and France to expanded military action against Communist China is not obtained, the United States should consider taking unilateral action.

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INCOMING TELEGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Rec'd: December 5, 1952

7:41 a.m.

FROM: Saigon

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 1149, December 5, Noon

SENT DEPT 1149, RPTD INFO PARIS 182, HANOI 127, MANILA 114.

Re DEPTTEL 1141, December 3.

The French have not (rpt not) asked for additional aircraft. What they do request and General Trapnell is urgently recommending is that the 30 F-8's already programmed be expedited to arrive here not (rpt not) later than January and that delivery of the 8 B-26's scheduled to arrive at rate of one a month during calendar year 1953 be accelerated.

The French yesterday made, however, urgent request on which in Trapnell's and my opinion immediately favorable action in some form or other should be taken. The request is that 150 American Air Force mechanics be detailed immediately to Nhatrang Air Base for one month to give 50-hour checks to 18 C-47's and 100 hour checks on another 18 C-47's. Nhatrang was chosen presumably because presence mechanics would be less conspicuous than if detailed to at Tonkin base or to Saigon. The French have made the same imperative request of the French Air Ministry, but according local information, French Metropolitan Air Force has only a few if any surplus mechanics for immediate despatch. The French request is entirely legitimate. When Salan asked for and was granted the 50 additional C-47's late



last summer (21 were provided by US), sufficient crews were available for normal maintenance. It was expected these would be used for tactical drops of parachute troops. No (rpt no) sustained air lift operation was or could have been foreseen at that time. With loss of Nghialo and the ensuing necessary decision of French command to attempt hold Na San to prevent overrunning that country and Laos, an air lift had to be instituted. As a result, the C-47's are operating at several times the normal rate, entailing urgent increased maintenance.

As an alternative to sending American mechanics, Trapnell and I have suggested possibility of the 36 planes being sent for repairs and checks to Clark Field. Trip to Manila would add extra flying time to the planes, but that might be the more practical operation. I can see no (rpt no) policy objection either to despatching American maintenance crews for a few weeks stay here or providing maintenance at Clark Field. On several occasions we have provided mechanical specialists for brief periods for instruction and repair of certain American equipment. This emergency maintenance is vital to holding of Na San and for meeting any other emergency air-borne operations.

General Chassin, CINC French Air Force Fe, arrives today from Tonkin to consult with Trapnell.

HEATH

OUTGOING  
TELEGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Dec 22 1952  
6:21 PM

SENT TO: Amembassy SAIGON 1286  
" PARIS 3523

Saigon TELS 1190 and 1197.

DEPT concurs in US participation maintenance C-47s by 25-30  
USAF personnel at Nha Trang on temporary loan basis. Defense  
notified and has taken similar position.

Defense has directed FEACOM to undertake such support and is in-  
forming MAAG Saigon.

Defense additionally queries MAAG French intentions on possibility  
retention mechanics due rotation.

ACHESON